
THE
CONVENT;
OR, THE
HISTORY
OF
OPHIA NELSON.

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I N T W O V O L U M E S.

V O L. II.

B Y A Y O U N G L A D Y.

Par là, reprit Justinien, vous allez sauver bien du monde ! Est-il besoin, dit Bélisaire, qu'il y ait tant de réprouvés ? Je sens comme vous, dit l'Empereur, qu'il est plus doux d'aimer son Dieu que de le craindre ; mais toute la nature atteste ses vengeances, & la rigueur de ses decrets. Moi, dit Bélisaire, Je suis certain qu'il ne punit qu'autant qu'il ne peut pardonner, que le mal ne vient point de lui, & qu'il a fait au monde tout le bien qu'il a pu telle est ma religion.

MARMONTEL'S BELISARIUS.

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M D C C L X X X V I,

ERRATA, Vol. I.

Page 3. line 27. for *Hauton*, read *Haut son*, p. 17. l. 27. f. *Lo*, r. *Le*. p. 18. l. 27. f. *Baïse Mains*, r. *baïsemains*. p. 75. l. 9. f. *Mau waïse*, r. *Mauwaïse*. p. 78. l. 18. f. *Diau Accablee* r. *Dieu Aceable*. p. 79. l. 2. f. *an*, r. *au*. p. 80. l. 14. f. *bourgeoïse*, r. *bourgeoise*. l. 26. f. *obligeon*, r. *obligeante*. p. 87. l. 2. f. *Craven*, r. *Nelson*. p. 142. l. 2. f. *De Auley*, r. *D' Aulay*, and so wherever met. p. 191. l. 33. f. *The sacred* r. *the most sacred*. p. 194. l. 10. f. *pleasures*, r. *lofs*. p. 195. l. 14. f. *regret bis*, r. *regret the lofs of bis*. p. 235. l. 31. f. *of*, r. *so*. p. 249. l. 4. f. *au*, r. *a la*. p. 263. l. 8. f. *Ninour Nimon*, p. 266. l. 1. f. *Go*, r. *Jo*. p. 279. l. 1. f. LXIV. r. XLIV.

V O L. II.

Page 19. line 11, 12. for *one*, read *once*. p. 23. l. 32. f. *persen*, r. *person*. p. 33. l. 22. f. *Baife mains*, r. *baifemains*. p. 36. l. 15. f. *gaiete deceaur*, r. *gaieté de cour*. p. 41. l. 33. f. *be*, r. *ibe*. p. 43. l. 24. f. *succes[s]es[s]ity*, r. *succes[s]es[s]s*. p. 51. l. 33. f. *flatter r. flatters*. p. 106. l. 11. f. *suppor*, r. *support*. p. 143. l. 7. f. *la*, r. *D*. p. 145. l. 32. f. *rffst* r. *ffst*. p. 176. l. 11. f. *de Ceaur*, r. *De Cour*. p. 191. l. 7. f. *or*, r. *of*. p. 201. l. 30. f. *we*, r. *be*. p. 222. l. 28. f. *rwinked* r. *twinkled*. p. 254. l. 6. f. *preceeded*, r. *preceded*. p. 269. l. 10. after *of*, add *making*. p. 276. l. 1. f. *resent*, r. *present*. p. 279. l. 8. f. *acess*, r. *excess*. p. 280. l. 10. f. *stipped*, r. *snaped*.

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THE
CONVENT;
OR, THE
HISTORY
OF
SOPHIA NELSON.

LETTER I.

From Captain STANHOPE to Mr. VILLIERS.

C——.

A NEW manœuvre of Woodville's! he has taken my Sophia, and his precious wife and daughters, to London. For what purpose (except to keep his niece out of my way) heaven knows; as it is yet too early in the season for pleasure.

Be his reasons what they may, off I go! my horses are this moment getting ready,

Vol. II.

B

and

and I shall soon see the charmer of my soul ! I am interrupted—a letter.

So, George ! I must take another route : the letter was from Lord Mortimer's steward.

My uncle is ill, and desires to see me immediately.—Would to heaven I could divide myself ; then would one part be following Sophia, the other going post to Mortimer Park.

But as this is not the age of miracles, I must content myself with attending his lordship. Duty, gratitude, affection, call for my implicit obedience to his request.

He has sent his post-chaise, and ordered relays of horses to be ready on the road.

Adieu. I must fly !

EDWARD STANHOPE.

LETTER

L E T T E R II.

From the SAME, to the SAME.

Mortimer Park.

YOU are surpris'd at my silence§ ; wonder no longer :— Lord Mortimer has been (and is still) so extremely ill, that the physicians begin to despair of his recovery.

His behaviour affects me strongly :—he will take nothing but from my hands, and can scarcely bear my absence for a moment. I am called away.

Lord Mortimer is become considerably worse. Doctor L—— (who speaks rather too plain for a disciple of Galen) says nature is nearly exhausted, and that he cannot possibly hold out longer than a fortnight.

The intelligence has affected me more than I expected. He has been extremely

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kind

§ This letter is omitted.

kind, since my arrival, that I cannot think of his dissolution, without feeling the utmost regret.

Were I to say this to any other than you, George, I should be certain of having my veracity questioned; there are few young men in the world, who would not sacrifice fifty old relations, were they to get as many estates by doing so.

Again interrupted—I will however dispatch this, unfinished as it is. Adieu.

E—— S——.

LETTER

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LETTER III.

From the SAME, to the SAME.

Mortimer Park.

DOCTOR L——'s prediction has been verified!—four days ago, my uncle, expired in my arms—That event shocked me so much, that I was in truth unable to write before.

His servants and dependents seemed not to participate in my concern, but all, ran with one accord, to worship the rising sun. They expect no doubt, that I shall be more liberal than his Lordship, and there they do not mistake.

The fire of youth is incompatible with that parsimony so natural to age, and I have always conceived, that the greatest pleasure attendant on riches is the power of dispensing them to the deserving.

My uncle's domesticks, have testified too much unfeeling selfishness, to be ranked in this class—I will add some trifle to their legacies, but no more must they expect.

The will was opened yesterday in the presence of some gentlemen of this neighbourhood. How was I penetrated with gratitude at the contents: I am left sole executor, and heir to all his fortune, real

and personal ; saving one thousand pounds per annum, to my mother, and twenty thousand pounds to Louisa.

I am now rich beyond my most sanguine hopes, the estates I possess, amount to seventeen thousand pounds a year, and I have an enormous sum of ready money by me. Will not all this unsettle my head, or my heart ? No, George, I can answer for both. A greater trial awaits the first—my Sophia !—my idol—my soul—my goddess—She will—she shall be mine !

None of your doubts, George, I am determined it shall be so ; if from a mistaken, romantick, nonsensical principle of honour, she attempts to hesitate, whether she shall give up her fortune, and his soul,* to that rascal Woodville, and endow me with the much richer treasure—of herself—by heaven—I will carry her off !—She loves me, I love her ; should we not be happy ! Adieu !

MORTIMER.

* See Gil Blas.

LETTER

L E T T E R IV.

From Lady MORDEN, to Miss CRAVEN.

Morden Place.

GOOD God! my dear Lucy! I am agitated beyond measure. That vile Woodville!—What can he have done with my Sophia—my dear, my amiable friend? Would to heaven, I had the power of punishing him as he deserves!

But I ought to recollect, that you are unacquainted with the cause of those incoherent expressions.

Know then, my dear Miss Craven, that I wrote to Sophia, soon after her supposed arrival in town. To that letter, (contrary to the usual punctuality) I received no answer. This however did not alarm me, as it might have been occasioned by a delay in the post.—I wrote twice more, and still with the same success; my apprehensions, then indeed became violent, and to relieve them, I dispatched a messenger to town, with directions to see Miss Nelson herself, if possible.

He returned last night, and oh, Lucy!—guess my terror, my astonishment, at hearing the following account.

“ The moment I arrived in London, I went according to your Ladyship’s orders, to Mr. Woodville’s house. I enquired of the servant, that opened the door, for Miss Nelson’s woman, adding that I had a letter for her Lady.” “ You might have spared yourself the trouble (answered he, furlily, as neither mistress nor maid are here.)” “ Then I must have mistaken the house (said I) for I was told that Miss Nelson lived with Mr. Woodville.” “ No, no (cried the man) you are not in a mistake at all, about that matter : this is Mr. Woodville’s house, and Miss Nelson did live with him, but at present she’s in another kind of lodging. I asked him then, to direct me to her. If I did (said he) I believe you would not be very willing to go in search of her. I begged him to explain himself, but he absolutely refused to say any more, and clapped the door in my face, vexed at not being able to execute your Ladyship’s commands, and was fauntering on, when I saw Mrs. Watson crossing the street : I called her. She turned, and expressed her joy at seeing me. I told her of my business in town : alas ! (cried she, interrupting me) God only knows what is become of my dear Lady ! She then told me, that on their departure from Woodville Hall, she, with another maid, had been sent on to town, in a hired chaise ; that Miss Cassandra, her mother, and Miss Eleanor,

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Eleanor, arrived in town a few hours after them. And that on enquiring of Miss Eleanor, for her Lady, and Mr. Woodville, she was reprimanded for her prying disposition and impertinence. Next morning, she was called up stairs, and Miss Eleanor, bidding her think of the night before, told her that she would be no longer suffered to attend Miss Nelson, and offered her wages—Mrs Watson refused to take the money, but quitted the house as she was bid." Since then she had never seen or heard of her Lady, though she had often walked near the house."

Thus ended my servant: but gracious heaven! how can I paint my emotions during the recital.

When Lord Morden, (who was absent at that time) came in, he found me in the utmost distress. "My love, my dearest Maria! (said he, taking my hand) why are you thus agitated?"—My heart was too full to reply. He repeated the question, and my father explained the cause, he was going on with the relation, when I interrupted him.

"He has murdered her! The villain has murdered my friend—my sister—my beloved Sophia!—he has assassinated her, for her fortune!" and indeed, Lucy, that idea was so strongly impressed on my imagination, that I almost fancied I saw her stretched at my feet, a lifeless corse.

Lord Morden's reasonings at length brought me to entertain another opinion. Ever kind and good, he is gone off this day to London to try what he can discover. Adieu, Lucy—my head is almost wild——yours,

MARIA MORDEN.

I have just got a letter from Mrs. Villiers; her uncle is no more, and Mr. Stanhope is become Lord Mortimer. Ah my God!—why did not this happen before.—

LETTER.

[11]

LETTER V.

From Lord MORTIMER, to Mr. VILLIERS.

Mortimer Park.

I WRITE these few lines, to tell you, that on Wednesday next, I hope to embrace you, and my Louisa.

I have at length finished my affairs here, heaven knows with what joy!—for besides the desire I feel to see my Sophia, &c. &c. I have ever had a sincere aversion to perusing musty title deeds, and worm-eaten parchments. And such a collection was never before seen, I believe, as in my uncle's closet. Things of use, and things of no use lay mingled, a receptacle for dirt and cobwebs: I have cleansed this Augean stable, though with little less than Herculean labour.

In short, beginning where others end, I have dismissed most part of my domesticks, and left the charge of providing others, to an old grey-headed steward, who seemed not over delighted with changing a master, whom he had served so long, for one he scarcely knew.

But now to talk of a more interesting concern.—I shall stay two days with you, and then fly on the wings of love, to the
metro-

metropolis . My Sophia !—my amiable Sophia—let me indulge the transporting idea—She will be mine for ever !

Let her mercenary relations, share her fortune amongst them :—in her I shall possess a treasure richer than the mines of Indostan !

I have not yet heard from Dick Woodville, who promised to write to me when he reached London ; perhaps his letters have been intercepted—but why should I weary myself with conjectures, when the denouement is so near ! Adieu—adieu.

MORTIMER.

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L E T T E R VI.

From Lady MORDEN to Miss CRAVEN.

Morden Place.

LORD Morden, is returned, without being able to learn any satisfactory account of my friend. The moment he reached London, he repaired to Grosvenor Square, and was ushered into a drawing room, where sat Mrs. Woodville, her daughters, and a mean looking young man, dressed in a very gaudy stile.

My Lord's title preceded himself, and ensured him a civil, if not a cordial reception. He could guess the different persons (all but the young man) from Sophia's descriptions,—Mrs. Woodville seemed to shrink beyond her primitive nothingness—Miss Eleanor played off all those silly and insignificant airs, which people practice in the presence of their superiors, with a view to give themselves consequence, yet which always fail to accomplish it. The young man covered with *mauvaise honte*, sidled half off his chair—in short, Cassandra alone seemed unmoved, and preserved her usual steady solemnity of countenance.

“ Perhaps, madam, (said my Lord to Mrs. Woodville; after saluting the rest) perhaps you may be surprized at this visit from an absolute stranger, but my name is
not

not unknown to you, and you are also acquainted with the friendship between Miss Nelson, and Lady Morden. Induced by the wishes of the latter, I come here: She has thrice written to that Lady, since her departure from Woodville Hall, and to her equal astonishment and concern, has never received an answer to either of these letters. The messenger whom she intrusted with the last, returned with a most strange and unaccountable tale; that Miss Nelson resided here no longer, and that your servant had refused to direct him to her present abode. Perhaps, madam, this is but a mistake of your domestick's, and I doubt not that you will have the goodness to tell me when I can have an interview with Miss Nelson."

"Indeed, indeed, stammered Mrs. Woodville (seeming half ignorant, and half acquainted, with his meaning) indeed, my Lord—your Lordship—I don't know any thing—my husband, Mr. Woodville, I mean, can tell you if he chuses."

"If he chuses, madam!—and why should he not chuse? This is a land of liberty: Mr. Woodville, though guardian of Miss Nelson's fortune, can neither controul her person or her inclinations, let him beware how he exerts more power than he is legally intitled to!"

My Lord spoke this in so resolute a tone, as made Mrs. Woodville tremble.

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“ Sir—my—my Lord, (said she, her lips quivering) I can’t tell—I—I—When my husband, Mr. Woodville, I should say, went to France.”

“ Lord, ma’am (said Miss Eleanor, interrupting her hastily) I don’t know what right, Lord Morden, or any one else has to ask any thing about my cousin. I suppose papa can do what he pleases without being called to an account by people that have nothing to say to him!——I am sure he doesn’t want either Lord Morden, or his wife’s advice, how to behave to his own niece!”

“ Cease, Eleanor (said Cassandra, with a lofty air) let us not debase ourselves, by treating this nobleman with scurrility.

Lord Morden bowed, and smiling, thanked her for this necessary interposition in his favour. He soon after came away, finding that Miss Eleanor was on the watch to prevent her simple mother from blundering out the truth.

Good God, Lucy! my Lord has just got a short billet from Mr. Villiers, to inform him, that he and Lord Mortimer, will call at Morden Place, in their way to town: how shall I break the dreadful news to him? Advise me, dear Lucy! but I forget that they must be here, before you can receive this. I know not what to do. Adieu.

MARIA MORDEN.
LETTER

L E T T E R VII.

From the SAME, to the SAME.

Morden Place.

My dear Lucy,

YOUR Letter, * proves equally, the goodness of your heart, and the strength of your friendship for Sophia ; but it shall not be the subject of any farther animadversions, as I know you must be impatient to hear how Lord Mortimer bears his disappointment.

I was sitting in my dressing room, in no very enviable state of mind, when the sound of a carriage, made my heart pant with redoubled violence. My woman in a few minutes ran to inform me, that Lord Mortimer, and Mr. Villiers, were arrived. " Where is Lord Morden and my father? (asked I, hastily) gone to walk in the wood, madam, I believe, for they went that way."

I bid her send a servant to seek them; and then, with trembling steps, went to the drawing room.

Both the gentlemen flew to me, at the same moment, and for a little time we were engrossed by mutual and occasional compliment,

‡ This Letter is omitted.

pliment, at length Lord Mortimer exclaimed, catching my hand.—

“ My dear Lady, you see a petitioner! will you assist my humble prayers? ”

I was so much embarrassed by the question, that after making several ineffectual attempts to speak, I burst into tears. Villiers stared, but Lord Mortimer, in a tone of the utmost perturbation exclaimed—

“ Great heaven! Lady Morden!—what mean these tears! My Sophia, is she the cause? Speak, dear madam, if you would not see me distracted! ”

Lord Morden entered that moment, and seeing my condition guessed our subject. He acquainted Lord Mortimer with the cause of my grief, and of his own interview with Mrs. Woodville. The other listened with more composure than I expected, and when my Lord concluded, after thanking him for the interest he took in Sophia's safety, turned to Villiers.

“ I must leave you my friend. I go this moment to London,—you will stay here 'till I write.— ”

He then went to the Bell, and rang it.—“ What mean you, dear Mortimer (cried Villiers) be assured I will not quit you! but why should you go to London? had you not better wait? Lord Mortimer interrupted him, “ wait!” if you love me, Villiers, talk not of waiting! ”

A servant

A servant appeared, with a sealed note in his hand, he presented it to me at the same time that Mortimer ordered his chaise to be got ready.

In all probability I should not have heeded the note then, had not the superscription caught my husband's eye;—"really Maria (said he) you have an extreme polite correspondent."—I looked at it, this was the direction. "From the injured and much deceived unknown, to the beauteous and illustrious Maria, the friend of her enemy." "What nonsense!" (cried I, flinging it away.) "Cassandra, exclaimed Lord Morden, I hastily took it up again, and perused the contents aloud,—they were as follows.—

THE BILLET.

"It is more heroick to forgive than to avenge an injury. From that conviction, I now address the friend of the unfaithful Sophia.—Haply I do more than forgive.—I serve her, who has rendered me a diskindness—know then, fair Maria, that this person (whom I have so much reason to hate) is immured in the recesses of a Convent, somewhere within the kingdom of Gaul.—haply I would be more explicit, but that duty forbids me.—

"Gaul—

"Gaul—Gaul! (exclaimed Lord Mortimer) she means France, and my rout is determined!"

"Surely, you do not depend on the intelligence of this fool! (cried Villiers.) Not depend on it! out of the mouths of babes and sucklings." "Adieu, my Lord—my Lady, I kiss your hands," he caught me: "By this, and this (cried he, kissing it twice) I will follow my Sophia, to France!"

"One more (said he, pressing my hand to his lips again) one more and adieu!" He flew out of the room.—His temper is naturally impetuous—"My Lord—my Lady—forgive the effects" (said Villiers, following him.) The carriage drove off—and we have not since heard from them, but expect a letter from Villiers every day—present my best respects to your parents, and believe me affectionately yours,

MARIA MORDEN.

LET-

LETTER VII.

From MR. VILLIERS to Lord MORDEN.

Dover.

NOTWITHSTANDING all Mortimer's impatience, the winds will not be hurried: (as the pagans used their deities) he alternately abuses and petitions them;—Prayers and curses are alike ineffectual, and here we are fixed for some time.

So much the better, I have leisure to give you an account of our proceedings.—When we were seated in the chaise, after our abrupt (and I am afraid uncivil) departure from your house, I asked Mortimer what he intended to do?—"Do, Villiers!—to discover my Sophia, or die!—Do you return to Louisa, and my mother; and to prevent them from being alarmed at my absence, tell the cause; I would thank you too, to take a trip to Mortimer Park, and put things there in a train to be executed according to the directions I have left with my steward. I will get bills of credit on some banker in Paris, and then away.

" A mighty

“Amighty pretty scheme! but you have omitted one circumstance that would render it perfect:—instead of going to Mortimer Park, I will accompany you; write your steward a repetition of those directions, for I will not be your proxy!”

We had a tolerable long dispute on this head, but I conquered.—Mortimer, impetuous in all his motions and designs, would be gone that minute:—There again I put in a caveat, and insisted on his first coming with me to Ashgrove.—In fine my lord, we went and returned, with two more companions—Mrs. Stanhope, and my Louisa.

So here we all are: but here I fancy we shall not long remain.

——*“For Mortimer, I spy,
Haste in his looks, and pleasure in his eye.”

We go, my lord.—Bon voyage.

Calais.

A parody on two lines in the Indian Emperor.

Calais.

A DUTCH cutter brought us here: there was an odd assemblage of passengers on board. They consisted of a methodist preacher, a beneficed divine, a raw city youth and his tutor, a grave old lady, who seemed under the auspices of the methodist, and her daughter, and a petit maitre, in a red coat and cockade.

For some minutes after setting off, we were all silent. The captain was the first who broke through this taciturnity; he began to complain of the immense heat of the weather, the disagreeable motion of the vessel; and above all, the harsh jargon of the sailors, which he said, affected his nerves prodigiously.

The tutor, (whom I found by his subsequent conversation, to be an equal enemy of refinement, and the French nation) eyed him askance during this speech; but when he heard him express a fervent wish to be speedily transported to Calais, where his nerves, no longer bored by the barbarism of the sailors, would regain their accustomed tone, from the politesse of the French, our Mentor, no longer able to bridle his resentment, exclaimed,—

“Aye—aye! you’re in a hurry to eat frogs and soup-maigre! go cram yourself with your filthy diet! plain roast beef is too

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grofs for your nice ftomach! 'twas fuch milkfops loft us America; they were powdering their hair, when they fhould have been priming their mufquets: for my part, I don't know no reafon, why we fhould maintain fuch drones in the hive! I wifh the parliament would take my advice, and fend thofe maphrodites to their dearly beloved French: they would do to drefs babies for the milleners, for I don't know nothing elfe they are fit for."

The man of war made no other anfwer to this fpeech than the epithet "Bete." uttered in a tone of infinite contempt.—

"Beat me, (refumed his antagonist) z—ds if I had you on dry ground, you'd fee if that was as eafy done as faid!"

Here I interpoled, and told him that the word he had taken offence at was French, and had quite another meaning from what he imagined.

"Aye (returned he) that may be, for I underftands none of your French lingo—no, no, I fcorns their gibberifh! I fpeaks Englifh well, and that's enough for me.—

You muft know this here lad is under my care. Now his father, Ben Cardiff, the ironmonger, being worth a pretty matter of money, had a mind that Billy fhould fee the world, and get a polifhing, as we call it. So he comes to me and asked if ever I knew of ever a proper perfen to take charge of him. My dear friend, fays I,

(for

(for he's a friend and neighbour of mine) I've heard a deal how and about the French innkeepers cheats us Englishmen, trumping up their confounded bills, with a sixpence worth of that, and a crown's worth of this, till they don't leave a man not a penny in his pocket. Now you know, though I says it, that shouldn't say it, that I am pretty cute and sharp in those matters, and wouldn't willingly let myself be wronged of a farthing, if I found I was cheated. So what's to be done, but to let me go with Billy, for I have a sort of a hankering after foreign parts, and I warrant I'll keep the Mounshears at a distance: You'll save the money too, that you'd be obliged to give to a son of a b—h of a tutor. Hey my boy—what say you?"—"Z—ds man! I take your offer, with all my heart," (says Ben) so away we went together, and got every thing ready. Ben was desired to get a French servant, but I put in a word against that. "What the devil, man, (says I) sure there's tall Ned that cleans my shop, will do as well as can be, without getting a French booby, that we 'on't understand one word he says.—You're right, faith, says Ben."

"Pr'y thee, sinner, hold thy peace, (interrupted the methodist at these words) or correct this unseemly habit of swearing. I have listened with the utmost impatience to thy execrations, fearful that thou, like another

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another Jonas, wouldst call down the vengeance of heaven on this vessel that containeth us. If a storm arises, I know what method should be taken to allay its fury; but I know also that no whale will be ready to receive thee, thou reprobate! no, rather devouring sharks will give thee a multiplied grave!"

Our mentor was not of a humour to bear these reproofs patiently; tout au contraire, he returned them with interest, and the methodist, who was a tall well-set fellow, would have saved heaven the trouble of punishing his antagonist, had not Mortimer and I interposed.

Harmony being thus restored, the preacher turning round, perceived the younger of the ladies chatting very freely to the beau, while the elder was talking earnestly to the pupil of the cit.

He seemed however most attentive to the motions of the first, and accordingly, rising in great agitation, (with an intention I suppose of interrupting that conversation that offended him) when an unlucky motion of the vessel throwing him off his equilibrium, he made an attempt to regain it, by seizing hold of the captain's toupee. The soporiferous preparation for so rough a salutation, could not guard himself against its effects, and fell disgracefully under the aggressor.

This incident had different effects on the spectators. The old lady, in pain for her

vol. II.

C

godly

gaily director, screamed aloud : the young one burst into a violent fit of laughter, in which she was joined by the cit and his pupil.

“ If I had an idea, (said the beau, rising and looking confused) that this rude assault was more the effect of intention than accident, *demme!* I should demand satisfaction ! but as I imagine the latter to be the case, I will let my indignation rest as well as my sword.”—So saying, he seated himself again by the young lady, to the infinite disquietude of her spiritual guide, who however thought proper to dissemble his resentment, as he just then observed her mother eyeing him with a peculiar expression of countenance.

No sooner was this disturbance quieted, than another began ; our mentor perceived, not much to his satisfaction, that the old lady was endeavouring to convert his *Telemachus* to *methodism*, while this last regarded the *petit maitre's* gestures and expressions with fixed attention and evident admiration. Neither of those circumstances meeting the cit's approbation, he roughly reproached the lady for inveigling his pupil, and then threw out some sarcastic *in-uendos* on frogs and Frenchmen, foppery and *soup maigre*.

The clergyman whom I mentioned in summing up the passengers, had passed his grand *climaacterick*, and to the fund of experience

rience attendant on age, joined a great share of cultivated good sense; so that we found him a most agreeable companion, as often as the impertinence of our company allowed us to listen to his conversation. I entreated him to dine at our hotel, and he accepted the invitation.

The methodist and cit were just beginning another quarrel when we reached shore. Here we had reason to admire the sagacious Mr. Cardiff's determination of sending his son to travel under the auspices of a person who knew no language but his mother-tongue, and that imperfectly, for the sole purpose of detecting the impositions of French innkeepers, whose bills he was unable to understand.

Half a score porters awaited our landing, and instantly seizing on the trunks of our cit (who had no servant to repress their insolence, but a raw, ignorant, London booby) immediately placed them on their shoulders, and walked off without farther ceremony. In vain did the cit sputter and threaten them with Bridewell—in vain did he load them with the most approbrious epithets; nor did he once recollect that they were totally ignorant of what he said, 'till I reminded him of that circumstance.

I advised him also to return home and learn the French language before he pursued his tour. To this counsel he answered with an air of indignation, that he would

just as soon be taught to gabble French, as to eat frogs in preference to roast beef.

Finding it impossible to bring him to reason, I e'en suffered my wife countryman to act as he pleased: yet, pitying his ignorance, by a reasonable application to the Lieutenant de Police, I got his trunks restored. I saw no more of him, as he had scarcely taken a slight refreshment before he set off on his tour; so much did he abhor and dread the inhabitants of Calais from the late specimen.

Mortimer hurries me away, and will allow me no more time than what I shall take in assuring your Lordship and Lady Morden of our party's best wishes.

I am your lordship's most sincere humble servant,

GEORGE VILLIERS.

P. S. We go to Paris immediately, and Mortimer hopes to procure an order from court (through our ambassador Mr. Fitz——t) to search all the convents in France.

LETTER

L E T T E R VIII.

From LADY MORDEN, *to* Miss GRAVEN.

Morden Place.

YOU will then come to me, dear Lucy !
 —Indeed I have much need of your society : my spirits are wonderfully sunk ; Lord Morden and my good father make use of every method to recall my cheerfulness ; but while Sophia's fate is so uncertain, I cannot, for my life, be otherwise than dejected.

The idea of her being in the power of that villain Woodville is too dreadful to support :—Pray Lucy, does christianity enjoin us to love, not only our enemies, but the enemies of our friends ?—If so, I am not a christian in that point, for so far am I from loving Woodville, that I think there are but two steps between my aversion for him and a most cordial hatred.

We have got more letters from France, but as they contain nothing material I do not send them to you. I must conclude abruptly Lucy, as I do not find myself well, and Lord Morden will not suffer me to write more. Adieu my dear,

MARIA M——.

L E T T E R IX.

From Miss CRAVEN, to Mrs. CRAVEN.

My dearest Madam,

Morden Place.

I HASTEN to give you some account of a personage who I flatter myself is not more indifferent to you than to other people—videlicet, myself! Poor Lady Morden is amazingly in the dumps, and really I think, without sufficient cause; I will give you my reasons, or rather Lord Morden's, by and by.—Apropos, his lordship is ten times more agreeable than ever; nothing like a little misfortune now and then to rouse all the latent powers of the soul. I do assure you, what with his endeavours to console his wife, and entertain me, he has put me a little out of conceit with your friend Chapman. But this between ourselves, for I do not wish to mortify the poor creature, as 'twould only make him look rueful, and you know that expression does not add much to the beauty of his countenance.—But this is digressing.

After the usual compliments on my arrival had ceased, Lady Morden asked if I had any objection to accompany her to London,

don, where Lord Morden (in hopes a little dissipation might raise her spirits) had prevailed on her to go. "I go (said her ladyship) in compliance with his wishes, but without any expectation of the effect he hopes. Nothing can restore my tranquillity but being assured of Sophia's safety; and alas, that event, I fear, is far distant!"

"Say not so, my love, (cried Lord Morden tenderly) you alarm yourself too much. Woodville cannot long persist in his present treatment of Miss Nelson, for his designs will be rendered abortive by her resolution: and as to what you seem most apprehensive of, that his villainy may extend so far as to effect her life, be assured he never will endanger his own so much as to tamper with her's."

Lady Morden said nothing in reply to this, yet seemed neither satisfied nor convinced by his reasoning. I cannot help, however, being of my lord's opinion: whether it is from any extraordinary degree of penetration, or whether from my natural propensity to view things on the bright side; certain it is that I have never yet been tempted to see this matter in the same doleful light my dear Lady Morden does. Were I in Sophia's situation (for you know according to Cassandra's heroic billet, she is in a convent) I would surely make Guardy's heart ach, and keep my own perfectly at ease.

A little confinement to a girl of my spirit would signify nothing, the novelty of such a thing would not be amiss. I declare I am half tempted to wish myself in her place; I should make fine work in a nunnery.—Heavens! how would the poor devotees stare!—And at present my life is too tranquil to shew my talents to advantage.—Alas! I meet with no difficulties, no disappointments, nothing to exercise my philosophy, or display my courage! Were it not for the amusement I make myself by quarrelling with Chapman, my mind would become a perfect vacuum.

I have no pleasure in what others admire so much, serenity and content:—no, give me the extreme of happiness, or none at all! I like a little agitation, even in inanimate objects; a murmuring rivulet has more charms in my eyes, than a smooth unruffled lake; the latter may impress your great imaginations with sublime ideas; to me it brings nothing but insipid ones.

My dear Madam, you must certainly do something to cross me. You must throw some obstacle in the way of my union with Chapman, or la belle passion will dwindle into indifference; nothing like difficulties to keep it alive. Thisbe would not have braved the terrors of the night, if there had been no wall to separate her from her lover. Had parents been kinder, and the said wall removed, she would have taken as
good

good and undisturbed a nap, as your humble servant ; the mulberries had remained white, and Ovid been deprived of a metamorphose. But I must confess (notwithstanding my passion for misfortunes) I should not be greatly pleased, that the end of my adventures resembled hers :—something less terrible would satisfy me.—After all, Madam, I do not insist on your compliance with the above request ; some person wisely said, Second thoughts are best ; I assent to the adage, as an example for you.

Well, but we positively go to town. I shall send an intimation of my arrival to the amiable family of the Woodvilles. Sans doute, that circumstance will give them much delight. I cannot conceive how Sophia gave offence to that discreet heroine Cassandra. I am interrupted—a letter from Paris, I send it to you. Adieu—do my baise mains to mon chere papa,

LUCINDA CRAVEN.

L E T T E R X.

From Mr. VILLIERS to Lord MORDEN.

Paris-Rue De—

WE have applied to Mr. Fitzh—t, but some dispute about the preliminary articles of the p——, having arisen, his interest is not as well as we could wish with the French ministry. Mortimer could ill brook this delay, was there not a necessity for our stay in Paris, some time longer. Mrs. Stanhope has had a slight fever, and her son accusing himself as the cause, thinks it his duty to nurse her well again.

Her indisposition, however, is not violent enough to prevent her from going sometimes to the theatre, of which amusement, she is extremely fond, and whither Mortimer constantly attends her. Two nights ago, something befel him in that place, which deserves the name of an adventure, and in which, I was obliged to share against my will.

As Mortimer was handing Mrs. Stanhope, out of the carriage, I observed a servant in a splendid livery, put something into his hand with a mysterious air. When we were seated in our box, I congratulated

lated him in a low voice, on his billet-doux.
 " You are right (said he, in the same key,) but I think it is rather violent, than soft." So saying, he put a note into my hands, which as near as I can recollect, was as follows :

TO LORD MORTIMER.

TO see you, is to love ! And I have not only seen, but conversed with you ! Alas ! one of these were sufficient to deprive me of peace ! Ah ! if the report be true, that the beauty of your form, can be only equalled by the insensibility of your heart, what remains for me but despair !

Heavens ! can that graceful form, those sparkling eyes, that animated countenance, conceal an unfeeling soul ? No, no, my own tells me it cannot be ! this night I put you to the proof.

In the box next the orchestra, at the left side, you will see the most enamoured of women between two others. If you join me, I shall experience more than the greatest earthly felicity ; if otherwise, you doom me to certain despair and rage, of which you will feel the effects ; choose which you please : but what do I say ! Oh, let your choice be such, as will give rapture to the bosom of

AMANDA.

Oh,

“ Oh, Mortimer (said I, laughing) you cannot surely refuse to gratify the Lady; — her passion must be very violent, for she loves and threatens in a breath.” If you have not gallantly enough to accept the fair on’s favours for her sake, you must certainly be kind for your own. But seriously, let us look as she desires.”

We turned our heads to the orchestra, and beheld in Mortimer’s Inamorato, the young and beautiful Duchess de Beaufort; a woman of the first rank in France, next the princesses of the blood.

She has been some time a widow, and to all the gaieté de cœur, of that state, unites an untainted reputation, which I need not tell your Lordship is rather an uncommon circumstance in this land of gallantry; and what I imputed to the multitude of pretty fellows who always surround her, for certainly there is no recipe so infallible to preserve a Lady’s insensibility as having a variety of admirers: She is then something in the predicament of the ass between two bundles of hay, and really the perplexity is greater on her side, as she has more objects of choice.

“ Faith, Mortimer, cried I, turning to him (who appeared equally surprized with myself, at discovering his correspondent in the Duchess de Beaufort) you do not deserve that dame fortune should consider you much, if you embrace not her present favour.

your. The conquest of a widow, rich, noble, beautiful, and young—what more can she do for you?"

"Yes, there is something more desirable, which were she kind enough to grant, I would raise altars to her praise! her present gift, notwithstanding the encomiums you lavish on it, is to me valueless, and unimportant."

"You are then determined to consign the fair widow to despair? I am determined to have nothing to do with her."—"How then mean you, to conduct yourself?"—"To avoid her as much as I can."—"I doubt you will find that impracticable."—"Fear not my government!"

Here, on casting a glance at the subject of our conversation, I observed her, seemingly, in much agitation: her bosom heaved with violence, her countenance underwent by turns, the extremes of tender languishment and haughty resentment: at the close of the second act, no longer able to controul, or conceal her indignation, she quitted the box, casting a look of angry contempt at Lord Mortimer.

Our party remained 'till the conclusion of the petit-piece, and I at that moment spying Sir William Carleton in another part of the house, flew to accost him, leaving Mrs. Stanhope and Louisa, in charge with my friend.

Sir

Sir William and I had numberless questions to ask, and answers to make, as people who are natives of the same country, generally have when they meet in a foreign one. These responses, &c. detained us so long that few people remained in the house when we quitted it.

I expected my vis-a-vis to have been in waiting, and called for my servants, but to my great surprize neither were to be found: at length a strange footman forcing his way through the croud, came up, and with an appearance of anxiety informed me, that my party had gone to sup at the Marquis de Villeneuve's (a nobleman with whom we are intimate) but that the coach in which they were, broke down within a few paces of the Hotel de Villeneuve, by which accident the ladies were much frightened, tho' fortunately not hurt, he added that the Marquis's chariot, waited to convey me to them.

A man cannot be very prudent, and much alarmed at the same time. I hastily ordered this footman to have the carriage drawn up, and almost instantly threw myself into it. It stopped in a short time, and I was ushered into a very magnificent hall, which did not resemble that of the Marquis's. "What means this?" said I, turning to my conductor.) This is not the Marquis de Villeneuve's—you have been deceived, or else you are committing
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deception, though I am at a loss to guess for what reason."

He replied not, but making a low bow turned to another servant, and whispered, I made an attempt to pass them, determined to use force if they prevented me, when four more, surrounding me, precluded all possibility of resistance.

Judge my vexation;—however, I was obliged to follow them quietly, whither they pleased to lead. Still preserving a strict silence, they conducted me to a drawing room, and when I had entered, instantly disappeared, and double locked the door outside.

One quarter of an hour was I left to enjoy the pleasure of my own reflexions; at the conclusion of that period, the door opened, and the Duchess de Beaufort appeared! Surprize and disappointment took possession of her features, and starting back, she exclaimed,—“ Good heaven! what do I see!”

“ I entreat your pardon, madam (said I, advancing) for thus taking possession of your apartment: perhaps you are not ignorant of your servant's motives for treating me as they have done, and therefore may be the readier inclined to grant my request: but now that I suppose you have sufficiently diverted yourself at my expence,—I will, with your permission take my leave.”

“ Stop,

“Stop, sir, (cried she, for I was going out after bowing very respectfully) Stop, sir, and listen to what I am going to say.—Your friend has not I believe left you ignorant of my partiality for him; added she, affecting to blush, (and spreading a fan before her face, to hide what the rouge that covered her cheeks, as effectually concealed.) You perhaps will condemn my weakness, but alas! our affections are not in our own power: too fatally have I experienced this truth. I no sooner beheld your friend, no sooner listened to the musick of his accents, than my heart, from the most insensible, became the most enamoured. Before, wholly engrossed by vanity, I thought that to be admired by a multitude was the perfection of pleasure. Alas! I am undeceived! I now find that admiration, once so covered, to be no longer capable even of amusing me—my sole wish is to be loved, and loved by one alone! Actuated by this wish, I have disclosed the secret of my soul to a man who I fear despises me.”

“Good heaven! and must I be despised!—is not my person, my rank, my fortune, worthy the acceptance of Lord Mortimer? Shall the Duchess de Beaufort be contemned with impunity?—no, first—but alas! how vain, how impotent are threats, that my heart recoils, from executing!—I will now confess, Sir, that Lord Mortimer,

not

not you, was the person I expected, and I cannot conjecture how my servants have been so much deceived as to bring you hither in his stead. Perhaps the mistake may be more useful to me than a punctual obedience; perhaps you may be inclined to pity an unhappy woman, to plead for her to your friend. Tell him, oh tell him! that not merely her peace, but her existence depends on his returning her partiality!—that for him she will quit her native country, her friends, her kindred, her connections for ever!—nay more—to shew his power over her soul—she will abjure her religion, for his! Shall not these concessions suffice? Oh speak not, breathe not the contrary! Let me not blush for having offered them!”

She paused here, as if expecting my answer, and I soon gave it, but not in the terms she wished.

It grieves me, madam, to hear you confess a passion, so injurious to your peace, for I know too well the absolute impossibility of its being mutual.—You start, indeed it wears the face of incredibility, that an object so charming, should not universally inspire, not merely love, but adoration! Yet your grace has observed that our affections are involuntary, and Lord Mortimer's have been long engaged, to an amiable country woman of his own, beyond the power of recall.

She

She interrupted me—"An English woman, say you?"

"Yes, my Lady, and the most fair of English women! His passion has been unfortunate enough to call for your pity, rather than your resentment."——

"He unfortunate! Good God—then who has a right to be happy!—Leave me, sir, you have planted daggers in my heart!——Adieu——if possible do not let your friend despise me, even though you should yourself do so?"

She quitted the room hastily at these words, and in a few minutes a servant appeared, who conducting me to the chariot, desired to know whither I would be driven—a short time carried me home, where I found Louisa and Mrs. Stanhope in much anxiety. Mortimer had gone back to the theatre (after conveying them home) thinking I had not yet quitted it. He there met with one of the attendants of the house whom I had employed to look for my carriage. This man acquainted him with the story the footman had related to me, and which I have already told you.

As Mortimer, knew this to be a gross falsehood, he became alarmed for my safety, but fancying his informant might be mistaken as to the accident, while the rest of his information was true, he instantly ordered his carriage to the Marquis de Villereneuse's—There he met no greater satis-

faction

faction.—He then came home—and to Louisa's question of, Where I was, answered with such an appearance of chagrin, that he was obliged to reveal the cause.—Not satisfied with his former search, he again went to the theatre, and again was equally successful; in short, he drove to all the houses where we were acquainted, and at length returning, mortified and disappointed, found me seated between Mrs. Stanhope and Louisa.

A mutual recapitulation of what had passed, now took place: my narration inspired different emotions in the bosoms of my auditors.

Louisa lifted up her hands in astonishment, at the freedom of Madame de Beaufort's declaration——Lady Stanhope regarded her son with a penetrating air, as if she wished to dive into the inmost recesses of his heart: While he seemed wholly engrossed by pity and concern.

And now, my Lord, think you if his search proves successlessly, for Miss Nelson, that the Duchess has any chance? I am sensible, the bare supposition will be highly resented by Lady Morden; and as incurring her displeasure would give me much pain, I know not whether you should communicate this passage to her.

It may, however, mitigate her anger to hear that I have never seen a more lovely woman than Madame de Beaufort, and that she

she loves Mortimer, is past a doubt—perhaps her method of shewing it is not the most faultless, but we should allow something for the influence of climate. An Englishwoman would—

“ Let concealment, like a worm i’ the bud
“ Prey on her damask cheek.”

But the French, laugh at such delicacy. Indeed there are few of them (from their volatility of temper) who are capable of feeling a real passion. Somebody has said, they make love an amusement, we a business—yet poor Madame de Beaufort, is an exception to the observation.

From my own experience, I do not hesitate to pronounce our method of loving the pleasantest. I would not lose the exquisite delight of attending to my Louisa’s every word and look, and of almost gratifying her wishes before she utters them, for all that prettiness of expression and insensibility of heart that constitute a French amant.—Adieu,

My dear Lord,

Your faithful

GEORGE VILLIERS.

LETTER

LETTER XI.

From Miss CRAVEN, to Mrs. CRAVEN.

Portman Square.

WELL, dear Madam; here we have been a week, and doubtless (as Cassandra says) I should conceal that circumstance, as you will accuse me of neglect, but I am sincerity itself, and cannot, even to screen myself from your displeasure, forfeit that inestimable quality. So far by way of preface, now for matter. I have seen the Woodville's, the younger branches, I mean; and pretty, promising pliant twigs, they are. I fancy they have been reading the fable of the old man, his seven (I know not if the number is exact) sons, and the bundle of rods, so instead of quarrelling among themselves, they wisely unite to abuse other people.

Ah! this passion of mine for allegory and allusion, is eternally running away with my pen! for once, I will try to speak plain, and let truth stand in the place of ornament.

Last Saturday evening, Lady Morden and your humble servant (having need of musick to harmonize their spirits) went to the

the opera. We were soon seated in the pit, though several sweet creatures of our acquaintance detained us for a little time, with exclamations such as these. "Lady Morden!"—is it possible! "Pray when did your Ladyship arrive in town? And my dear Miss Craven, too!" "Lord, you can't think how pleased I am to see you! I really thought you had been long since deposited in the family vault!"

We had not been long seated when Lord Morden and Sir Charles Courtney (a quondam suiter of Sophia's) joined us: After a little indifferent conversation, Sir Charles, with a half suppressed sigh, asked Lady Morden, when she had heard from her fair friend Miss Nelson. The question made Maria start, and Sir Charles finding she did not speak, resumed his discourse.

"Your silence, my Lady, confirms what I have heard. Good God! and is Miss Nelson indeed so ill?" "So ill, Sir Charles! (interrupted I) what do you mean?"

"I hope indeed, I have been deceived (resumed he) but this morning meeting with Mr. Woodville (whom I had sometimes seen at the late Mrs. Nelson's) I enquired for his niece; and received for answer, that she had been for some time past in a declining state of health, which of length alarming him considerably, though she seemed insensible of her danger, he had conveyed her to Montpellier, but the state

of his affairs requiring his return to England, he had left her in charge with a very worthy and respectable family, his particular friends."

"Good God ! is it possible ! (cried Lady Morden) then Lucy we have all been deceived ! Alas how foolish, what vain hopes ! (added she, correcting herself) Sir Charles, Mr. Woodville deserves no lenity, I will therefore tell you that his intelligence is absolutely false."

She then informed him of the truth—and while he was expressing his concern and wonder at the recital, the following exclamations drew our attention to something else.

"Oh heavens, who are these odd creatures ! Did you ever see such frights ?"—
"No, never in my life." I declare, they are enough to kill one with laughing !"

My party, as if with one consent, turned their heads, when behold—Miss Cassandra Woodville advanced with "solemn step and slow," and a face which for its gravity, would not have disgraced a funeral. Behind her, tripped Miss Eleanor, dressed in the extremity of the fashion, and accompanied by her brother Dick, and another young man. At length Cassandra, (after parading between the benches for some time thought proper to sit down, which circumstance apparently relieved

Miss

Miss Eleanor much, who seemed not highly pleased with her sister's tardy pace.

But nothing could be more diverting than their different behaviours, when the curtain drew up—Dick stared in stupid astonishment. Eleanor (having heard that it was fashionable to expire at an opera) shut her eyes, and practiced ten thousand ridiculous airs, during the singing of the worst performer. The young man who came with them, shared all the attention she could possibly spare from herself, and he to shew his gratitude for the distinction, laughed aloud at every word she uttered. Cassandra, mean time, scorning to receive entertainment from any thing, sat totally unmoved.

Dick, chancing to catch my eye, hastily turned his head another way, this manœuvre astonished me much, as I expected he would have been transported with joy at the rencontre. I waited with impatience for the conclusion of the performance to unravel this mystery.

The wished-for time, came at last. My party, passed quite close to the Woodville's, in going out. I bowed to Cassandra. She started, gave me a look of indignation, and turned her eyes away, with an expression of disdain. As I was going to demand an explanation Miss Eleanor burst into a loud laugh: the audience stared, and quickly

quickly passed on, shocked and disconcerted by so rude a reception.

While we were waiting for our carriage, half an hundred beaux crouding around us, prevented Lady Morden and me from making any animadversions on what had happened.

Really, my dear madam, I was so hurt by this creature's impertinence, that I passed a sleepless night—hang philosophy—at least the theory—and I believe there is little of the practical, in the world at present. This accident has taught me I possess but the first sort. That's a mighty pretty story (let who will believe it for me) of Epictetus's sitting still and seeing his leg broke with—"there—I told you you would break it".—Much good may it do him, with his penetration. Adieu,

Dear Madam,

Your affectionate,

LUCINDA CRAVEN.

L E T T E R XII.

From the SAME, to the SAME.

Portman-Square.

“ Come haste to the wedding, ye friends,
“ and ye neighbours.”

“ MARRIED,—this morning, in —
“ Church, Heremon O’Flaherty, Esq. to
“ Miss Eleanor Woodville. — A young
“ lady who proves the greatness of her de-
“ scent, by the excellence of her qualities.
“ The union of these two ancient fami-
“ lies, must be productive of much plea-
“ sure to all lovers of antiquity.

“ Note bene. The bride has a large for-
“ tune in expectation.”

NAY, do not stare, Madam, really and truly, this is verbatim, the first paragraph that struck my eyes, in this day’s Morning Post.—“ A large fortune in expectation.” Do you not wonder at the impudence? I fancy that *Note bene* was added by the *amiable* Eleanor; for I don’t imagine

imagine her father stupid enough to criminate himself, and every body must be sensible it is Sophia's fortune that is meant. O yes, I hope with all my heart, they never may have more than *expectation*.

Notwithstanding Mrs. Bride's insolence at the Hay-market, I am dying with curiosity to see her monster, and shall assuredly pay her a visit very soon.

But dear Madam, now that I have disburthened myself of this matter, I will bring my affairs on the tapis.—Do you know that I am seriously angry with you: but you shall hear the cause, and then judge of the effect.

I was sitting this morning in Lady Morden's dressing room; she at her tambour, I reading Home's Sketches of the History of Man: (by the bye, I shall love Lord Kaims, as long as I live, for giving me such increase of knowledge) I had just laid down the book to make a few comments on what he says about women, when somebody tapped at the door: "Come in," said your unsuspecting daughter. Helas! pauvre mouton—what should I do amongst wolves!

Well, the door opened, and in came Chapman! The first thing I did was to scream, then blush; in short, I suppose I betrayed ten thousand silly emotions; for the creature flew to me, and taking my hand, exclaimed "My charming Lucy, do not be alarmed: how this sweet confusion flatter me!

me! Good heaven can I be so blest!—can it be true!—is it possible!”

“ Yes, it is very possible (said I, recovering myself) though rather strange, to be sure.”

“ My life! my adorable Lucy! how happy you make me!” cried he, almost devouring my hand. “ Nay, stop my good friend, (said I, disengaging myself) how comes it that you are so much interested in this affair? But a truce with interrogations for a while; do you not see Lady Morden?”

This seasonable question brought my swain to his senses. I introduced him to her ladyship, and really he acquitted himself almost as gracefully as I could wish: but then resuming his foolish speeches—“ How lucky that your ladyship happens to be present (said he) otherwise my fair tyrant might perhaps disavow that transporting declaration.”

“ Not I, indeed (returned the lady) since it pleases you so much, I certainly shall not contradict it.”

“ Thus let me pay my thanks (cried he rapturously, and fell at my feet) my kind, my charming Lucy!”

“ Hey day! (exclaimed I, looking astonished) pray Lady Morden have you an almanack? I want to see how the moon is! upon my word it is a melancholy thing.”

——“ Ah! (cried Chapman) blame your

self if my senses are deranged!—your condescension.”——“ My condescension! I suppose you are not more indebted to than to the Morning Post.”

“ Lucy, (interrupted Lady Morden) I am afraid we must examine the almanack for you now.”

“ Why so, my lady; surely you read that paragraph too.”

“ Riddles! riddles! (exclaimed the impatient Chapman) What have I to do with the Morning Post?”

“ O cry you mercy! then I have been in a mistake. I really imagined you asked me, if it was indeed true, that Miss Eleanor Woodville was married this morning, and I satisfied you, to the best of my power, though I confess somewhat at a loss to guess why that event should inspire you with so much rapture.”

Would you believe it Madam? the creature took all I said for gospel; and looked so crest-fallen, so mortified; that I could not for my life, forbear laughing.

“ I am glad to see you so merry, Madam,” said he peevishly.—“ O yes, I dare say you are! for you, I know, live but in my smiles:—see my dear Lady Morden, how the wretch looks!—Ah what a blessed time should I have of it, were I to take him for better for worse! how fortunate that he has shewn his dark side before.” I made an affected pause. “ Before what?”

said

said he tenderly, and putting on an insinuating air.—“ Why, before—before I had asked you to be of my party to the play this evening.”

Thus we trifled for near an hour, 'till at length the gentleman was restored to his accustomed good humour, though without any undue concession on my part. Then, and not 'till then he told me, that this pretty surprise was concerted by you.—Judge Madam of my anger ! As the object within reach generally fares worst, I rated him to some tune, and at length he had the grace to blush and beg pardon.—Ah what a pleasant thing it is to have a great lordly man in such order !

And now, Madam, give me leave to expostulate a little with you. Consider, if you please, what would have been the consequence, if I had been as silly as you expected :—no more coquetting, no more teasing, no more power ! Men are naturally inconstant; perhaps he and I should have changed characters :—only think what a pretty figure I had made, sighing, dying, languishing :—he giddy, gay, indifferent.—Oh ridiculous !

“ By keeping men off, you keep them on.”

Is a truth of which I am well convinced, and please heaven, my practice shall not contradict my sentiments.

Aideu, dear Madam, I must make haste to dress for the play.

Friday

Friday noon.

WE were delightfully entertained last night—in other words, we wept ready to break our hearts: in short we felt all that sorrow which pleases, while it pains one, and which I need not trouble myself to define any farther, as (if I do not mistake) you have often been amused that way yourself.

Mrs. Siddons—You have heard of her. But without ocular demonstration, you can have no idea of her power over the passions. The play last night was *Venice Preserved*, which is one I do not like, though so generally admired. *Belvidera* is the only character in it worth a farthing—*Pierre* is a great blustering, huffing bravo, dignifying villainy with the name of honour, and having no one particle of humanity about him, but his friendship for *Jaffier*, who is himself a poor whimpering, whining, irresolute coward.

He a lover, I have no patience!—At the beginning indeed he makes several soft, pretty, passionate, pathetic speeches: But dear Madam, remember the scene, where as a means of gaining *Pierre's* forgiveness, he makes that noble and husband-like proposal of going home to cut his wife's throat! But this is nothing to the purpose; I was speaking of Mrs. Siddons.—O heavens!

such grace, such pathos, such sensibility! No, I give up the vain attempt. I find it impossible to treat the subject as it deserves.

I am just going to visit the beautiful bride, late Miss Eleanor Woodville:—not a word more till I return.

Four o'clock.

AS I shall have an hour to myself before dinner, I think I cannot employ it better than in giving you an account of what passed at Woodville's.

Lady Morden's chair carried me to Grosvenor-square, I ordered the footman who attended, to give a most violent rap at the door, and he obeyed so punctually, that I myself was half frightened.

A servant in a flaming new livery appeared. On enquiring if Mrs. O'Flaherty was at home, the oaf replied, He did not know, but he would go and ask her."—"There is no necessity (said I, fearing she would be denied) I shall ask her myself."

I came out of the chair in a moment, and bade him conduct me up stairs: he seemed rather at a loss what to do, but on a second command obeyed. We had got half way

to

to the drawing-room, when he pulled my sleeve—I turned round astonished. “An you please, Miss, (said he, scratching his head) to tell me your name, cause my mistress told me I oft’n’t to let any body in without hearing who they were.” “Pshaw, (said I laughing) its no matter, I shall see your mistress this minute.” “That’s true Miss,” said he grinning; and without any farther conversation I passed on to the drawing-room.

The fair bride was alone. At seeing me she betrayed no little confusion; but as shame cannot be long felt, but by an ingenuous mind, she soon recovered her natural effrontery.

She addressed me with a sort of grin on her countenance, and a——“ Lord Miss Craven! I’m sure I didn’t think of meeting you here!”——“ I am sorry, (said I, not seeming to understand her hint) that you should entertain the least doubt of my felicitations on your change of condition: our intimacy in the country authorises me to wish you joy.”

At that moment entered Cassandra, and the young man I had seen with them at the opera. The former (starting back with a rapidity not natural to her) exclaimed,——“ Good heaven! questionless my eyes deceive me!—What do I see!”

Not willing to take notice of these disappointed expressions, I pproached her, and

taking her hand, "Permit me, dear Cassandra (said I) to express," —before I had time to conclude the sentence, she snatched away her hand, and stalked to the window.

"Pray Mrs. O'Flaherty, (asked I) in what have I been so unfortunate as to offend your sister? for this behaviour does not accord with her accustomed good breeding."

"Your own heart, Madam, (returned Cassandra) will best reply to that interrogation: and questionless your temerity is very extraordinary, thus to rush into the presence of one you have injured; haply beyond a possibility of forgiveness.—Yet maugre my just resentment, I cease to reproach you!" So saying she opened the door (to which she had been slowly advancing during the speech) and instantly going out, drew it after her with no inconsiderable force. Astonished and offended at this behaviour, I again repeated my question to Eleanor.—

"O Lord, you don't know, to be sure, (returned she, with a malicious giggle) but here comes my brother Dick, may be he'll tell you."

That polished youth did really appear at the door; but no sooner 'spied me than he started back as if he had trodden on a snake.

Really

Really, Madam, I knew not whether to laugh or cry at these ridiculous incidents; but wisely giving the preference to the former, I wished to get more matter; therefore turning to Mrs O'Flaherty, begged to be introduced to her Caro.

"O dear, yes to be sure! (said she, turning hastily to the young man whom I mentioned before) Mr. O'Flaherty, this is Miss Craven."

He bowed, or attempted to bow, "I am proud of the honour of seeing my wife's friends, though they be no more than acquaintance."

"Well done, Heremon! (thought I) thou dost not bely thy Milesian race."

"Pray Miss Craven (said Eleanor) isn't it true, that Lord Mortimer is gone looking all over the world for my cousin Sophy?"

"Who?" cried her husband, "Lord Mortimer, (returned she in no very gentle tone) I am sure you have heard me speak of him a hundred times, for all your question!—He used to be at Woodville-hall very often, 'till my papa forbid his visits: he pretended to be in love with my cousin, but I know her fortune was all he wanted."

"And pray, Mrs. O'Flaherty, where is your cousin?—For I know not how to believe a story that Sir Charles Courtney told me he had from Mr. Woodville, of Sophia's being gone to the South of France, for the

recovery of her health ; which, when I saw her last, was not visibly affected."

" O dear ! then you may believe it, for it took her suddenly."—" And pray what was her disorder ?"—" O I believe a decay, or something of that sort," said she stammering.

" Lady Morden, (continued I) cannot divest herself of a suspicion that Miss Nelson has gone abroad against her inclination. They were intimate friends ; yet Lady Morden has never received a line from Sophia, since her departure, nor did she even give a hint of her expedition, though before that they corresponded regularly."

" As to that, I don't—I can't say, I am sure, what reason she could have : but I could shew you a letter that I got from her the other day."

" I shall be very glad to see it," said I, eagerly.—She turned red, then pale, then red again ; and fell rummaging her pockets very expeditiously :—at last, " I ha'n't it here, (said she) I suppose it's above stairs somewhere ; but I can tell you what's in it, and that's as well, you know." " It is so, pray do."—" Why she says that—that, I declare I forgot half of it, but she says she is a great deal worse."—" Indeed, (cried I, with a penetrating look) then I suppose you all go to Montpellier immediately,"—" I—I don't know, I believe so."

Heartily

Heartily tired of my visit, and finding I could do nothing in the way of discovery, I arose, wished Madame la Bride a good morning, and was handed down stairs by her Teague; a good looking quiet savage enough, but as part of Miss Eleanor's goods and chattles, my aversion.

Uncivilized, and all bogg-trotter as he is, I am convinced his rib's beauties, personal or mental never attracted him. No, no, he certainly had a hint about Nelson's will, and depending on his beau pere's villainy, wisely put up with a partial inconvenience, in expectation of a future good.

I'll lay my life he seeks his native mountains soon. With this prediction I conclude.

Adieu my dear Madam—I hope you and my father, are assured of possessing the most affectionate regards of

LUCINDA CRAVEN:

L E T.

LETTER XIII.

From MR. VILLIERS to Lord MORDEN.

My dear Lord.

Paris.

YOU are without doubt astonished at my silence, and your surprize must be increased by the date of this letter. Yes, our search has been suspended, not by choice, but a most melancholy necessity—I have been on the point of losing my friend for ever.—Good God, what anxiety, what distress have I endured within this last fortnight.

About a week after I dispatched my last letter, I sat down to write another, with an intent to give you a recital of our hopes, rather than our proceedings:—It was night, Mortimer had gone to visit Mr. Fitzh—t; I expected him every moment, took up the pen, and was disturbed from my employment by the following billet.

To

To Mr. VILLIERS.

"THE Marquis de Lifson requests that Mr. Villiers will immediately repair to his hotel, in the Rue ———. He has had the good fortune to rescue Lord Mortimer from the hands of assassins, yet is in some fear that his interference came too late."

Judge, my Lord, what feelings the perusal of this billet gave me. I will not trouble you with a detail of my exclamations and distractions. After having given the necessary directions that my wife and Mrs. Stanhope might not be alarmed, conducted by the Marquis's domestic, I flew to my friend.

I was ushered into a drawing-room immediately, where sat a gentleman and lady, whom I conjectured to be the Marquis and Marchioness. I was not mistaken. "Mr. Villiers, I presume," cried the former:—"The same, my Lord—my friend."

"I know what you would say, (returned he) this is no time for ceremony, I will lead you to him."

So saying, he led me to another apartment on the same floor. "Du Bois, (asked he softly, of a venerable old man who opened the door) has he slept?" "No, my Lord, he is still awake."—"I bring you one,

one, (said the Marquis, going up to a bed that had the curtains closed) whose presence you so much wished."

"Villiers—my Lord is't not so?" cried Mortimer faintly, and attempting to draw aside the curtain.

"Dear friend, dear Mortimer, (exclaimed I, throwing myself by his bed side) what has reduced you to this situation?" He was going to reply—"Stop (says the Marquis) your physicians have ordered you to be silent, and I take upon me to be their proxy."

Mortimer gave him an acknowledging look, "Two words, my Lord, to inform my friend how much I am indebted to your benevolence."

"There is no necessity, dear Mortimer, every thing I see, every thing I hear, tells it me."

"My mother, Villiers, is she informed?"

"Be in no pain on that account, I promise to deceive her."—"Thanks dear George." "Come, come, (said the Marquis) you are infringing my directions; Mr. Villiers we will retire." He pulled my arm, and we quitted the room.

Instead of returning to the drawing-room, I went home, assumed not only an easy but a lively countenance, and told my wife and Mrs. Stanhope, that Mortimer had gone to Versailles with Mr. Fitzh—t, and was uncertain whether he should re-

turn

turn next day. This done I feigned an engagement to supper, and went back to the Marquis de Liffon's. I found him and his lady together. They received me not merely with politeness, but cordiality, and I had the following account of my friend's affair, from the Marquis.

I was returning from an estate in one of the distant provinces, where I have been a month. My chaise broke down within two leagues of Paris, and my impatience to see this lady (smiling at the Marchioness) would not suffer me to wait for its being refitted: I accordingly took a horse from one of my servants, and left him to come on at his leisure in the chaise, while I accompanied by two more, galloped on to Paris." In passing the Rue de —, I heard the clashing of swords. I ordered my servants to follow, and directed by the sound, came to a place where I saw three men engaging one, who had his back against a wall. Shocked at so unequal a combat, I dismounted, my servants did the same; one took charge of the horses, another accompanied me. We were both armed with pistols:—"Courage, Sir, said I, advancing—we bring you assistance." As I spoke one of the villains made a stab at Lord Mortimer, and all three then attempted to fly. I fired that moment, he who received the ball, staggered a few paces, but was borne off by his companions with

with incredible speed. I should certainly have pursued them, had not Lord Mortimer's situation called for instant relief; loss of blood had rendered him extremely faint, and we supported him to my house which was just by. I sent for medical assistance, and the physicians pronounced him in great danger, but happily none of his wounds are mortal.—You know the rest.”

“ I do indeed know (exclaimed I) that you are the noblest of men. I thank you for preserving my friend—I do more, I esteem you, I love you with the affection of a brother !”

“ You feel nothing for me then (said the Marchioness, with an arch smile) all your affection, all your esteem is to be engrossed by my lord and master—Eh Monsieur.”

“ Ah Madam ! (said the Marquis gaily) you know my chief claim to esteem, is being an appendage of your's.—But come Mr. Villiers, we will try how Lord Mortimer is now, and leave this prattling girl to herself.”——“ Oh well, you may escape me now, but I shall see you again !”——

We went to my friend's apartment ; Du Bois met us at the door. “ Take care, my Lord, (said he softly, and putting a finger to his lips) make no noise, he is still asleep.”

We retired on tiptoe. The Marquis entreated me to return to the drawing-room, but

but as I determined to attend Mortimer most closely, there was a necessity for acquainting Louisa with some of the truth.

I therefore returned home, and waited very patiently 'till Mrs. Stanhope retired to rest. Louisa perceived that something hung upon my spirits, and tenderly enquired the cause. I continued silent—this alarmed her still more, and in a tone of great perturbation she again entreated me to tell her. I then disclosed the whole affair, softening only her brother's danger: To my wish, her fears had been so roused, as to expect even worse tidings; she therefore, though much distressed, behaved with more composure than I had dared to hope.

Anticipating the plan I had formed, she desired me to go instantly to her brother, and undertook to continue Mrs. Stanhope's present deception about the journey to Versailles.

I flew back to my friend, watched by him that night, and by morning had the affliction to behold him in a strong delirium. It now became impossible for me to quit the Marquis's.—I wrote to Louisa, entreated she would support her spirits, and informed her of my inability to go home—bade her tell Mrs. Stanhope, that Monsieur De V——'s, charmed with Mortimer, had invited him to spend a few days at his chateau, some leagues from Paris—that

I was

I was also included in the invitation, and we had both thought it would be highly impolitick to refuse; as this visit would most likely expedite the business that brought us to France.

Louisa acted like a heroine, obeyed my instructions punctually, and only by her billets which I received constantly, shewed how much her heart was affected.

In short, my lord, Mortimer continued eight days in a state of the most imminent danger, on the ninth, his disorder came to a favourable crisis; and now he is so well recovered as to be able to leave his bed, did the surgeons permithim: but his wounds though in a good way, are not yet healed, and 'twould be dangerous to tamper with them.

We have informed Mrs. Stanhope of every thing; and as to describe the scene that followed that disclosure, would only pain your feeling heart.—I entirely omit it.

We are bewildered in conjectures about Mortimer's assassins.—I cannot suspect the Dutchess of Beaufort, though love often takes the form of hatred.

A few lines more to describe our amiable host and hostess, and I have done.

The Marquis is not handsome, but there is an expression of good sense and benevolence in his countenance, that while

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while it commands your respect, engages your affection. His person is extremely genteel, and his air so noble, that you would need no other confirmation than appearance to pronounce him a man of quality and fashion.—To these externals he adds a well cultivated understanding, and an excellent heart.

The Marchioness is tall and beautifully formed. Her features are handsome, yet (though far from masculine) more expressive of dignity than softness; in short, were I to make a statue of Minerva, I would chuse this lady for my model.

Though possessing none of the volubility of her country women, her disposition is not deficient in vivacity: her wit is not of that flashy sort, that pleases the imagination, without touching the heart, and her conversation equally adorned by the lively fallies of fancy, the correct restraints of judgment, and the mild effusions of good nature, pleases yet more on reflection than whilst you are an auditor.

One would conclude this amiable pair happy as they are deserving, but I have often seen a cloud of sorrow sadden the countenance of the amiable Marchioness, that told me she too had felt the common lot of humanity. Adieu my lord. Mortimer bids me say every thing to you, Lady Morden, and Miss Craven, expressive of the utmost affection.

GEORGE VILLIERS.

L E T T E R XIV.

From Miss CRAVEN, to Mrs. CRAVEN.

[With the preceding letter enclosed.]

Portman Square.

I WILL suppose you have read the enclosed—What a horrid affair!—I dare say that forward Madame Beaufort is at the bottom of all.

From such love, good Lord deliver us—Poison and daggers—pretty douceurs!—I have no patience with such a virago—have you?

'Tis well for poor Sophy, she is hid the Lord knows where, out of the reach of evil tidings, or this news would go near to serve Guardy effectually. “Bad wind, &c. &c.

But my dear Madam, do you know I have a strong idea that this amiable Marchioness, is neither more or less—than—Ah! I will go no farther, but like ancient oracles hide half my meaning in obscurity, and so preserve a reputation for wisdom, at the cheap rate of being mysterious.

I have not seen the Woodville's since I wrote last:—talk of the Devil—this moment I am told Mrs. Flaherty is below.

My agreeable visitor is gone. Do you know she was impudent enough to enter into conversation with Lady Morden, before my entrance.

After some unmeaning compliments on the part of Madame La Bride, and suitable returns on mine, I ventured to ask if she had brought her cousin's letter.

"No, indeed, (answered she reddening) I could not find it; and that's true, I wanted to speak to Mr. O'Flaherty!" So saying, she bounced out of the room, and we saw her no more.

Oh heavens, Madam! I have something to tell you very material—and all that—Would you think it—I—I—Ah I find 'tis in vain!—I cannot go on—it will so lower me in your opinion—no wonder, when I am so much so in my own.!

Oh heavens!—Were you to see me now, such a figure—face, neck, and hands like a cook maid's! Blushes becoming! they may talk as they please, but for my part I see nothing beautiful in them. I am of a different opinion from the Greek Lady, who when asked what colour was most becoming, replied,—“that which is the offspring of shame.”

Perhaps these were not the very words;—but I know no reason why mine may not explain the matter as well—As I said before—I find it absolutely impossible to tell you.

So dear Madam adieu, till another opportunity.

LUCINDA CRAVEN.

LETTER

LETTER XV.

From Mrs. CRAVEN to Miss CRAVEN.

My dear Lucy,

Belmont.

A LETTER from Chapman has done that which you found so impossible. I am happy, inexpressibly happy that you have at length ceased to trifle with a man who is every way worthy of you. He is all rapture, and does not give a much more plain account of the matter than you do.

But the different stile of his letter is to Mr. Craven and me, a certainty that you have acted as we wish. Be assured my dear child, that in consenting to your own happiness, you ensure it to your parents, and I am very sensible that is a secondary consideration with you.

I think it is Epictetus who says, that the more rarely the objects occur, the more delightful they are.—I subscribe to the truth of this apothegm; for I am certain, had you not made me believe that event to be far distant, which I now conclude to be equally near, I should not feel the very delightful emotions I do at this moment.

Take

Take then, my dear child, your father's and my affectionate blessing, and warmest wishes for your happiness; hasten to us, and receive them from our lips.

I feel for our friends on the continent. Heaven grant us all a speedy and a happy interview.

Adieu my love, your father charges me with numberless kind and tender wishes.— You know not how dear you are to the heart of

MATILDA CRAVEN.

L E T T E R XVI.

From Miss CRAVEN, to Mrs. CRAVEN.

Portman Square.

A H my dear Madam, you are so kind, so good,—and so deserving!—but the Creature, (I beg your pardon) Chapman—indeed he has deceived you!—’Tis true I have some how or other avowed a sort of a trifling partiality for him; but I leave you to judge whether that (though matter of confusion enough) was sufficient to warrant the presumptuous hopes he seems to have entertained.

Ah Madam, how cruel you are in your kindness!—“ You are rejoiced that I have ceased to trifle with a man every way worthy of me!”—What a latitude do you allow to his merits!—Well, but that is nothing to the purpose; I was speaking of your cruelty, by supposing I have ceased to trifle, and then loading me with thanks and blessings in consequence of that supposition; you have taken from me all power of acting otherwise: this is just as they treat children.—“ Aye, I knew Master Jackey was the best boy in the world, he never
cries,

cries, not he, (Master Jackey, mean time, roaring like a bull) he is never cross, see how he smiles, how he laughs, &c. &c." I, in the same predicament with Master Jackey, am told I have done what I should do; and yet, what nevertheless remains undone.—Ah you are too sensible, that coaxing suits me better than correction, and I am terribly afraid this knowledge of yours will render me very good and very insipid at last.

But do you know that Chapman himself is extremely in the way of your project:—How is it possible that I should avoid laughing at a man who is every moment either blustering or whining? Why does not he foil me at my own weapons? You will answer to this, that heaven does not endue every body with an equal share of wit.—O Madam what an idea have you called up! —The Ass and the little Dog exactly.—Yes, yes, I give up the point.—Interrupted, a letter from the continent.—I hasten to let you read it. Adieu my dearest Madam; notwithstanding all my folly, all my levity, I entreat you and mon chere pere to believe, that I am as grateful, and love you as well, as if I were the wisest and gravest Miss upon earth.

LUCINDA CRAVEN.

L E T T E R XVII.

(Enclosed in the preceding.)

From Mr. VILLIERS, to Lord MORDEN.

Paris.

MORTIMER's impatience has retarded his cure, and he is still at the Hotel de Liffon.—What is yet more extraordinary, we are all under the same roof. The Marquis and Marchioness, would neither hear of Mortimer's removal, nor of his being separated from his friends; accordingly Mrs. Stanhope and Louisa have taken up their residence with us.

You are no doubt impatient to know if we have discovered who set on the assassins. I cannot entirely gratify your curiosity, but will hasten to tell you as much as I myself am acquainted with.

Three days ago, as I was sitting in Mortimer's apartment, my servant brought me the following billet.

To

To Mr. VILLIERS.

SIR,

" IF you will take the trouble of repairing to a mean looking house at the corner of the Quai de —, you will find a person who is willing to make all the reparation in his power, for the late base attempt on Lord Mortimer, by discovering the inciter to that action.

" You may bring what attendance you please with you, if you are apprehensive of any new design.

" Pray what is that paper? (cried Mortimer) you seem agitated."

" O you are not acquainted with all my *petites affaires*:—Suppose it a *billet doux*."

I arose and went out; but having none of that heroic *rondeur* about me, that scorns every appearance of precaution, wisely, (though perhaps not bravely) ordered two servants to attend my steps.

We came to the house on which the epithet of mean, &c. seemed well bestowed. I was directed up stairs, my servants following, and was conducted into a shabby room, where on a still shabbier bed, re-

clined a pale emaciated figure, who raised himself on my entrance.

“Is your name Villiers, Sir?” said he, in a faint voice. I answered in the affirmative.

“Can it be possible then Sir, that you will forgive a dying wretch, who confesses himself one of the perpetrators of an infamous attempt on the life of your relation?” I started involuntarily.

“I do not wonder (he continued) at your turning with abhorrence, from a person who avows himself guilty of such a crime:—But let me hope to acquire, through you, Lord Mortimer’s forgiveness, without which I cannot quit this world in peace!—Do you still regard me with detestation, or are you disposed to procure me that pardon I desire?”

“I am (returned I) and I hope Heaven will forgive you too:—But you promised to reveal the cruel instigator of this attempt.”

“I am prepared to do so.—The Marquis De Beauville is the person.”—“The Marquis de Beauville! Good God!—what could induce a nobleman, with whom my friend has not the smallest connexion, or even personal acquaintance, to be guilty of so base a design?”

“I am as much unacquainted with his motives, Sir, (returned he) as you are.—All I know is, that the evening before this
affair

affair happened, the Marquis met me in the street, when to my shame (I suppose) he observed something in my countenance, that led him to conclude I should be a fit instrument for his purpose. He bade me follow him into an unfrequented alley, then taking out a purse, asked if I would do him a piece of service, for which that should be a reward. I instantly guessed the business in which he wished to employ me; for what other service could a person of his figure, require of one of mine? This conjecture made me hesitate. On the one hand those principles of virtue I had imbibed in my youth, (and which a series of abandoned actions could not entirely erase) all forceably militated against so horrid a proposal: but the sight of the purse, contrasted with the miseries of present indigence, too easily overcame sensations that had long lain dormant, and were now but weakly felt. In short, I consented to do all he wished; nay even desired associates to secure the perpetration. The first approaches to vice are painful, and we totter at every step; but the farther we proceed, though the dangers of the way encrease, we every instant regard them with less dread, 'till at length we plunge into an abyfs of guilt, from whence there is no return!

“ I—! am this wretch!—I have plunged into this abyfs, and misery present and future is my lot! I tire you, Sir, Heaven

interfered, and saved Lord Mortimer. I was the person whom the Marquis de Lifson wounded so desperately. My companions in wickedness bore me out of reach of pursuit, and it was then deliberated whether I should not be put out of the way entirely. One more merciful than the other preserved me from the stroke of death, and supported me hither. But Oh great God ! (if indeed I dare to call upon thee !) what torments have I not since endured ! bodily suffering has awakened the scorpion of conscience ; and that moment which the one induces me to call for as the end of pain, the other makes me shrink from with dread and horror, as the beginning of punishment !—But Sir, I have no right to detain you : let me then again request, that you will persuade Lord Mortimer to forgive me ; his pardon will be some consolation to the last moments of an unhappy wretch—but one, alas ! whose misfortunes are no more than the just consequences of his vices !”

He ended here, and his conversation so infinitely above his appearance, strongly interested my curiosity : therefore, after assuring him of Lord Mortimer’s forgiveness, and making an offer of assistance, I hinted a wish to become acquainted with some of the circumstances of his life.

“ You shall be gratified, Sir, (said he) and though the recital will inspire nothing but

but abhorrence and disgust, I have deserved these effects, and in justice ought to feel them." These words uttered in a tone of grief made me repent my request, and decline its gratification.—But he insisted so strenuously on telling his story, that I was forced to give way, and he began in the following manner.

THE STORY OF MR. DALTON.

I AM the youngest child of a good family in Ireland, of the name of Dalton. My father resided a few miles from the metropolis, on a small estate which descended to him from a line of ancestors, more famed for their virtue, than their affluence. I had many brothers and sisters, and my father, who judged a good education to be not only the superstructure of virtue but wealth, had us early instructed in the elements of polite literature.

For this purpose he took a proper person into his house, as the smallness of his income, would not allow our being sent to public schools. Girls and boys were equally the objects of his care, and each were

taught alike, so that my sisters became more learned, than the generality of men. Little as I have answered his expectations in the subsequent parts of my life, I then surpassed them. My thirst for knowledge was unbounded, and those hours my companions passed in play, I spent in study.

My family at length became apprehensive, that the intenseness of my application might injure my health. My mother carried me with her to Dublin, where she spent the ensuing winter, at the house of a friend. I was introduced in publick, I was shewn all the fine things calculated to please the imagination of a child. I was taught to dance, to ride, but still my heart panted for solitude and books, and every moment I could snatch from dissipation, was devoted to my favourite amusement.

One day my mother broke in upon my retirement unexpectedly, and surprised me penning a childish sonnet: charmed with this discovery of my abilities, she hastened to communicate it to my father. On him it had a far different effect.—He was pleased that his children should be acquainted with the writings of others, but he dreaded their becoming writers themselves.

This propensity of mine gave him much uneasiness, and he was one day speaking of it in a large company, where Mr. G— an eminent attorney happened to be present. This gentleman gave it as his opi-

nion

nion, that the study of the law, at least that species he practised, was the surest damper of genius; he added that he himself had been a dabbler in poetry, in his youth, but that by the timely care of his friends, in binding him to his present profession, had lost the desire of making verses for that of making money. My father struck by his words, entered into a closer conversation, and before they parted, it was determined that I should be articled to Mr. G——.

Every thing was concluded, and I took up my residence in the house of my new master. The crabbed study of the law was but ill-suited to my disposition, and for some time I regarded the deprivation of my usual amusement, as the most bitter of all misfortunes. My father (who as I said before, would suffer me to read, though not write) offered to supply me with books at my leisure hours: but Mr. G—— argued against this as a most improper measure, and his reasoning prevailed.

For some time Mr. G—— had no cause to be pleased with my services, but my mind was too active, to continue long in that idle state; and I pursued my employment with such diligence, as to obtain his approbation, and ease my father of his apprehension.

At the end of the third year of my clerkship, my father presented me with what I

should have once thought a most invaluable gift; this was no other than a well chosen set of books in the learned languages, and a few English and French besides:—but my literary taste had flown. The authors of antiquity, were now become as distasteful to me, from the disuse of their language, as the study of my profession had once been, and I no longer read any thing but those trifling works which may hurt, but seldom improve. In short, I now possessed no fixed principles, and if I continued to behave properly, it was more from the absence of vice, than the impulse of virtue.

I approached the nineteenth year of my age, and the last but one of my clerkship, when one morning an elderly lady came (accompanied by her daughter) to consult Mr. G——, on an affair in litigation between her and a kinsman. I was present, but much more attentive to the looks of the young lady, than observant of her mother's discourse. The former indeed was a striking object; the blush of native modesty suffused her cheeks, and enlivened the most languishing blue eyes I had ever seen: in short, her face and person were one continued charm. She observed my admiration, and her complexion became still more heightened; but several timid glances which she occasionally cast towards me gave

gave me some reason to flatter myself, that our feelings were mutual.

The visit was soon ended, and I thought its duration still shorter than it really was. I waited on the ladies down stairs, and in putting the younger into her chair, gave her hand an involuntary pressure. She drew it back with a mixture of indignation and surprise, and before I could either apologise, or enquire her name of the chairmen, they had hurried away with their lovely burthen.

From this moment I became indifferent to every thing that had before amused me. Yet, I frequented the theatres as often as I could, in hopes some lucky chance might bring her again to my view.

One night as I was returning home, I jostled by two chairmen in their attempt to pass me. By the light of the lamp I perceived they carried a lady, and both seemed extremely intoxicated. I walked on regardless of this circumstance, when a scream of terror, made me turn my head. The chairmen had fallen and overturned the chair; I flew to assist the lady, and cursing the fellows for their sottishness, disengaged her; but what was my surprise, my transport, to find the object I had been so long in search of!—it was she herself!

I testified my pleasure in the most rapturous expressions, and she returned her acknowledgments in a voice, sweet and timid

I did not recollect how unreasonable the hour and the place were for conversation, 'till she expressed a tender fear of her mother's being alarmed by her absence; then and not before I perceived the impropriety of my behaviour, and begging she would entrust herself to my care, requested to know the place of her abode. She frankly complied with both, and we proceeded to her lodgings.

When we reached the door she entreated me to enter, but I declined it then, and said I would call in the morning to know how she was after her fright,—so fearful was I of a negative being put on this self invitation, that I walked hastily off the moment she had got within side the door.

The next morning I flew to her lodgings, and on sending in my name which I had previously told her, was instantly admitted. The mother received me with every expression of pleasure and gratitude, and repeatedly thanked me for the protection I had afforded her dear Fanny. The latter said little, but looked unutterable things. Pardon me if I dwell too much on this time of my innocence, and of my happiness, I shall have too soon far different incidents to recount.

Mrs. Alleyn, so was the old lady called, intreated me to dine with her, I accepted the invitation with transport.

Fro

From that day, my visits were often repeated, and I soon began to speak on the subject of passion to the enchanting Fanny. She listened, blushed, and at length confessed, that she felt an equal partiality for me. O fatal confidence! O unsuspecting simplicity! Wretch!—wretch that I was, to take advantage of it! Yes, I planted thorns in her bosom who would have died to procure ease for mine.—I destroyed her peace who would have endured a thousand torments to ensure my felicity!

My passion was still unabated, but the unhappy girl pined in secret sorrow. I visited at the house, but my visits were not so frequent as before. To see her pale, emaciated, her eyes full of tears, pierced my heart, but a weak, a foolish delicacy, to which I had forfeited all pretensions, would not suffer me to offer her the only reparation that remained in my power. I prevailed on myself to fancy that a woman who had been so complying to me, would be equally lavish of her favours to others: Vain and ridiculous surmise. My Fanny, though thrown off her guard one fatal moment, was purity itself! She pined, she sickened, at the ideas of a crime which was mine alone; and such was her delicacy, that she never gave the slightest hint, except by mournful and downcast looks of what I ought to do.

Oh

Oh God!—Yet I could injure such delicacy!—Could trifle with such sensibility!—Oh Fanny! Fanny!—dost thou not from thy seat of heavenly glory, smile at the tortures of the wretch who destroyed thee? Oh no!—thou wert all sweetness, and wouldst cherish the snake that stung thee to death!

I take up too much of your time, sir; but I cannot restrain my emotions, when I consider with what unparalleled cruelty I behaved to that lovely creature.

The time came at last, when she could no longer conceal her indiscretion.—She was with child! She communicated to me this circumstance, with reluctance and tears.—I affected to laugh at her fears of a discovery, and mentioned twenty methods of concealment, each equally extravagant and impracticable. She heard me in silence and quitted the room with a look, that struck me to the heart—yet still I could not relinquish my ridiculous scruples. I fancied it would be an eternal disgrace to me, to marry a woman, who had given so great a proof of her weakness.

I went not to the house for two days more, and on the third received a message from Mrs. Alleyn requesting to see me immediately. Not yet lost to all sense of honour, I obeyed the summons, though dreading the event.

It was as I expected; she perceived the situation of her daughter, and by mingled entreaties

entreaties and menaces became mistress of the whole truth. Contrary to Fanny's fears, this disclosure was followed by no other effect than my being instantly sent for. On my entrance, Mrs. Alleyn spoke to me nearly in this manner.

"I have long imagined, Mr. Dalton, that I had nothing but gratitude to return you, for the service you did my daughter: but to my sorrow I now find that I ought to feel an emotion of a contrary kind."—
Oh Mr. Dalton!—is it possible that you, whom I thought incapable of deceit or cruelty, should have rendered yourself guilty of both in so high a degree! "Let what is past however, be forgotten. I doubt not that you are willing to make a proper reparation to my child for the wrongs you have done her: her fortune is trifling but you may in time rise to eminence in your profession, and my house is open for you till that event happens."

She ceased expecting my answer. I paused—I hesitated—Fanny penetrated my thoughts, and with a spirit that did her honour, threw herself at Mrs. Alleyn's feet, and exclaimed,—"Cease, Madam, I beseech you—never, never shall Mr. Dalton reproach me for having been forced upon him!"

"No, here I solemnly protest, and I call heaven and earth to witness, that I will never be his wife!"

Mrs.

Mrs. Alleyn drew back, terrified, and astonished. For a moment, I felt a sensation of pleasure, that she had thus herself refused me; but that unworthy emotion soon gave place to admiration:—I was going to speak, when she interrupted me.

“If you would now solicit me (said she) you know I cannot be yours; spare me then, I beseech you, any unnecessary pangs leave me for ever!” “Leave you for ever——Oh, Fanny, say not so!”——“Stop fir, I cannot hear you: some minutes ago I could have listened with pleasure—I cannot now!”

“Fanny, Fanny (exclaimed Mrs. Alleyn) why have you made this vow? for what purpose.”——“Spare me, dear Madam, I cannot recal it.”——

“Oh my beloved Fanny (cried I) your vow was a rash one, heed it not—I will——”

Again I paused—I looked at Fanny. The beam of momentary pleasure that had taken possession of her features, was vanished—why should I dwell on this scene? I deserted her! Villainous and base, I deserted, and left her, a prey to the calumniating tongues of the multitude!

I called once more at the house, but was denied admittance: and soon after heard that the whole family had gone into the country. There was a period now to my connexion with Miss Alleyn but I could

not so easily get rid of the pangs that tormented me. My mind was in a continual tumult between love, compassion, and false delicacy. The former at length prevailed, and I was considering how to apply again to Fanny, when this letter was brought me. Read it, sir, for I cannot (said he, putting his hand in his bosom, and taking it out of a little silk case, which hung by a ribbon from his neck.—He pressed the paper to his lips, raised his eyes to heaven, then again fixing them on the paper with a look of anguish—sighed—and presented it to me. I copy it for you.

TO MR. DALTON.

BEFORE you receive these lines, the writer will be no more! Oh Dalton! will that reflexion be to you productive of pain? too sure it will not!—you who could give up the woman that sacrificed every thing for you to shame, despair and infamy! you will feel nothing but pleasurable emotions, at the idea of being separated from her for ever!—Enjoy this idea, Dalton; represent her to yourself, bending under the weight of affliction.—Those cheeks, which you in happier hours likened to the new blown rose, pale, fallen in—Those eyes you have gazed at, haggard, dim, almost sightless. Fancy the last sigh quivering on those

those lips, which foolishly betrayed the secret, of a still more foolish heart ! Behold the poor Fanny stretched a lifeless corse, tender mother weeping o'er her, and execrating her destroyer !—Does the picture shock you ? Do you turn away with horror ? Does not your blood run cold ?—Ah Dalton, Dalton ! Why do you repent so late ? Why was your compassion so tardy

“ When * wretched woman stoops to folly
 “ And finds, too late, that men betray,
 “ What charm can sooth her melancholy,
 “ What art can wash her guilt away ?

“ The only art her guilt to cover,
 “ To hide her shame from ev'ry eye,
 “ To give repentance to her lover,
 “ And wring his bosom—is to die.”

Ah Dalton ! and I will do so ; I will die a few moments more, and I go for ever !

Dalton, wilt thou breathe one sigh to my memory ; wilt thou shed one tear on my grave !”

* * * * *

I felt emotions, my Lord, at the perusal of this letter, that unmanned me. I turned aside my head for a few minutes.

“ You

* Goldsmith.

"You are affected, Sir, (said the miserable Dalton) you are affected even to tears. Ah had you known my Fanny!—my Fanny! wretch that I am, do I call her mine! who with more than hellish barbarity, left her a prey (as she feelingly says) to shame, despair, and infamy!

The perusal of this letter distracted me; I flew out of the house in a transport of frenzy. I ran to Mrs. Alleyn's lodgings, pressed the people to tell me, where she resided in the country. I used promises, entreaties, and menaces by turns. They were invulnerable to all, and from that moment I have never seen Mrs. Alleyn; but the public papers gave me a too fatal confirmation of Fanny's death.

The pangs of conscience were more than I could bear. To relieve them in part I associated with a set of dissolute young men, who like myself wished to drown reflexion, plunging into vice.

My master at length took notice of my disorders, he expostulated gently on the consequences of this behaviour. I answered fiercely, that I was now old enough to govern my own conduct. He retorted sharply:—the dispute arose to some height: at length inflamed by passion, forgetful of my duty, I struck him! I would have sworn worlds to recall the blow, but that impossible, I sunk at his feet, and implored him to pardon me. "Arise, Dalton,"

ton (said he in a calm tone) arise and hear me." I obeyed. " You must be sensible (continued he) that after what is done, we can live together no longer. I bear you no malice, but I will see you no more.—I shall not discover to your parents what occasions our separation: keep your own secret, quit the kingdom, and I will recommend you to an eminent attorney in London, my near relation; with him you may stay during the remaining time of your clerkship: if you behave well, you will gain his friendship, and perhaps recover mine. I will give you a sum of money to defray your expences, and by my representation of this matter to your father, prevail with him to add something more—answer me not, but prepare for your departure; the packet fails in two days.

Again I attempted to throw myself at his feet—he would not suffer me, but bade me say no more, and we separated. Every thing was settled as he had said, my parents suspected nothing. They presented me with their blessings, and a fifty pound bank note.

The day the packet sailed I wished the last of my existence; but the measure of my crimes was not yet full.—I got up to London, gave my letters to Mr. I.—and was favourably received.

But my new master's character was very different from Mr. G——'s. The latter

'tis true, liked to make money, but 'twas for the purpose of spending it worthily; and he never made use of any one mean or crafty action to attain it.

Not so Mr. L——; his insatiable avidity for wealth was only to be equalled by the variety of tricks and subterfuges he put in practice to acquire it; and the excessive and extraordinary care he took to guard it when obtained. For that reason, though he dispensed with honesty in himself, he strongly recommended it to his dependents, and I soon after my arrival, received a long exhortation on that head.

I observed my employment with so much diligence, that he soon shewed a greater portion of favour to me than to any other of his clerks, and I began to flatter myself, that my bad habits were totally eradicated. Alas how much was I mistaken! The seeds of vice had taken too deep a root in my soul, never to be entirely destroyed, and if they lay for some time dormant, it was for want of an opportunity to call them forth.

Towards the conclusion of my servitude, being one night at the play-house, I entered into conversation with a young man of genteel appearance; who made such judicious remarks on the performance, and uttered such sallies of wit, that I became enchanted with his sentiments, and earnestly desired a continuance of his acquaintance. He accorded it with much frankness,

ness, and seemed equally charmed as myself, with the prospect of a future intimacy. We then appointed to meet at a coffee-house next evening, and I departed home.

I counted the minutes with impatience, until next evening—it arrived, I went to the coffee-house, met Mr. Williams, accompanied him to a tavern, where we supped, and returned home with reluctance at twelve o'clock, such was his powers of fascination!

About this time I went with my master to witness a will on which a great deal depended, and which he was to draw. This circumstance may appear immaterial to my story, but you will find it otherwise in the sequel.

Every moment I could now spare was spent with Williams. In some time, I discovered him to be a free-thinker—that circumstance shocked me extremely at first, (for unworthy as I was, I yet retained a sense of those religious principles in which I had been bred) but soon the subject became familiar to me, and by being familiar, lost the greatest part of its horrors. The sophistry of his arguments perplexed without convincing me, and I soon became ashamed of confessing in publick, what was now become a terror to my private moments.

One evening he desired me to accompany him to a gaming table. I started at the proposal,

poposal, I hesitated in my compliance, but went nevertheless. I determined however not to play—vain determination; I was drawn in to bet on Williams; he was unlucky, and with reason, for his opponent was a noted sharper. In consequence I doubled my bets, lost again, and came away at two in the morning, without a penny in my pocket.

Williams consoled me with an observation, that the same chance that had one night rendered me unlucky, would another bring me good fortune, and a promise of a sufficient sum to embark again.

In short I was now become a professed gamester, and experienced all the vicissitudes that gamesters usually do. My master either saw not my irregularities, or winked at them if he did: at this period he became remarkably fond of me, trusted me with the dearest thing he had on earth, his wealth, and I received fees, and transacted acquittals, receipts, &c. in his name.

This was too great a temptation for one who had almost forsaken every species of virtue. I could not resist it, I embezzled various sums of money, and all were inevitably sunk at the gaming table. A gentleman, a client of my master's, followed the usual custom of giving me the fee in trust, when he was out of the way; this went with the rest, and the gentleman who had gone to the country to remain for a

month, returned in less than a fortnight. Mr. L. who possessed neither true or false delicacy on the subject of money, asked this gentleman for his fee, and to his great surprise learned that it had been paid long before.

I found a terrible storm burst on my return from an interview with Williams. Mr. L—— reproached me in the grossest language, and threatened me with the most horrible fate. Thunderstruck at this discovery, I confessed all, and the consequence was, that Mr. L—— instantly quit-
ted the room, and double locked the door. The confusion, inseparable from guilt, rendered me motionless, and had the means of escape been within my power, I should not have used it.

In less than a quarter of an hour, the door opened, and Mr. L—— advancing, said to two men that followed “There is your prisoner.” I was instantly seized, put into a hackney-coach, and hurried to Newgate. Oh Sir!—wicked as I was, were you sensible of my emotions at that time, you would pity me.

The moment Williams heard of my misfortune, he came to see me. I did not reproach him for the share he had in my offence, for except in this last instance, he had been as unlucky as myself. He tried to amuse me ’till the hour of retiring came, and then took his leave, promising however to call next morning.

The horrors of that night, were more than I had ever experienced: yet terror brought not repentance. The shame of an ignominious death, and the desire of revenge on Mr. L—— possessed me wholly. For some days, though Williams was constantly with me, I observed a fixed and gloomy silence; but custom which reconciles the most disagreeable things to the imagination, soon brought me to be rather easier if not contented in my situation. The time of my tryal approached, and that I should not be ignorant of any vice, I spent whole days and nights in the grossest intoxication.

Three days before that appointed to decide my fate, the goaler introduced a gentleman, whom I fancied I had seen before; I did not mistake, he was brother-in-law to the person whose will Mr. L—— had drawn, and had been present at the time. After a long preamble, and many expressions of commiseration for my unhappy situation, he unfolded the business which brought him to visit me, and surely 'twas a most villainous nature. He wanted my assistance—Oh Heaven! I cannot go—let me bury this shameful affair in eternal oblivion. The dread of impending death, if I refused—The hopes of life and liberty if I complied, induced me to consent to an action that my soul abhorred:

'tis true when once in possession of my freedom, I might have retracted, but a sense of false honour prevented me. The person who thus rescued me from an ignominious fate, proposed my going to a foreign country, 'till the odium of my late accident had blown off: he promised to remit sufficient sums to support me creditably.— Oh God, how dearly did I purchase them at the price of all a man and a christian should hold sacred!

Williams accompanied me to France which country I chose in preference to any other, as I understood and spoke the language. As reflexion can be only pleasing to the virtuous, I who had committed many crimes, would, if possible, have flown from myself. Amongst other modes of dissipation, gaming bore a principal share. Again we pursued it with avidity, and again met with various success. Our career however could not hold. Williams had a dispute with a musqueteer, and the dispute cost him his life. His antagonist fled for a little time, but by the interest of his family was pardoned and recalled.

Some circumstances had appeared in the discussion of this affair, that bore hard on the character of the unhappy Williams and consequently on mine.

My former acquaintance first slighted and then forsook me. My remittances for a ph

Mr. ——— became less frequent, and at length entirely ceased. I wrote to him once or twice threatening to disclose the whole scene of iniquity in which I had engaged, if not more attended to. I received an answer which told me that concealment was no longer necessary, and scorning my menaces. I was now reduced to associate with a nest of villains who preyed on the public, some depredations we committed, rendered it dangerous for us to appear by day. In one of my night excursions I met with the Marquis de Beauville. You Sir, know the event of that interview, therefore it is needless to repeat it. I have before told you that I was wounded that fatal night—had I received proper assistance, perhaps I should have recovered to bear a fresh load of misery and vice; but my wounds for want of care have rankled, and are now I believe beyond a possibility of a cure. Thus situated, too wretched to live, and too wicked to die, I expect hourly the approach of that stroke, at once my hope and my terror."

The unhappy Dalton at these words fell back nearly exhausted. I called my servants who still waited, and dispatched one for a physician and nurse, and the other for

some strong cordials. Dalton would have thanked me but could not; his narrative had been of such a length as to weaken him much, and I more than once repented having suffered him to tell it.

The physician arrived, examined his wounds, and felt his pulse. He gave a more favourable opinion of the former than I expected, and declared the latter was so low as to require strengthening cordials.— So far my Lord, you see I was right. In short, I had poor Dalton made as comfortable as the place would allow, and after assuring Monsieur Le Medecin that his attendance should be well considered, and giving a strict charge to the nurse to be more than usually careful, I went back to the Hotel de Liffon.

I gratified Mortimer's curiosity which had been so highly raised by the length of my absence. He shuddered at the recital, was pleased at my arrangement of things, and then in his own peculiar stile swore that I should find some other cloak than charity to cover my multitude of sins, for that he was resolved to take this matter upon himself.—“ But George, (said he, taking out a purse and giving it to me) though I intend to have the merit, you shall have the trouble, a division which many great men make with their dependents, so here, expend this as you please.”

Mortimer

Mortimer, my Lord, makes virtue wear a smiling aspect, there are others who give her the face of a Melpomene, your Lordship may decide which is most captivating.

Though I have not said any thing of Mr. Fitzh—t, do not imagine we neglect the affair that brought us to France. Mortimer I assure you uses me like a pack horse in this business, and yet I am much afraid it will not succeed.

Adieu, my Lord, my party join in best respects to you and Lady Morden.

G— V—.

F 5.

L E T.

LETTER XVIII.

From the SAME, to the SAME.

Paris.
SUCH a detection my Lord!—but I will not anticipate.

Some days ago Mortimer and I went airing (for the first time since his illness) a few leagues into the country. In our excursion we met a gentleman on horseback, whom we knew to be the clergyman, you may remember to have accompanied us from Dover to Calais.

Mortimer ordered the postillion to stop, and we made ourselves known to him, he recognized us immediately, and we all testified equal pleasure at the rencountre.—Your Lordship need not be told, that in a foreign country we feel a predilection for every thing that belongs to our own, and perhaps the same person whose acquaintance delights us in Paris, in London we would solicitously avoid.

Doctor Wentworth, however, is not of this class; to a seemingly benevolent heart, he unites the utmost refinement of manners, therefore, an intimacy with him must be desirable every where.

We

We prevailed on him to enter our carriage, and to give his horse to the care of a servant, and on our return to town, Mortimer presented him to the Marquis and Marchioness, as one for whom he had an esteem.

They gave him a suitable reception, and insisted on his staying dinner, to which he readily assented.

While we were all sitting sociably together at this meal, a venerable old man entered the room. The Marquis and Marchioness welcomed him with an air of mingled reverence and pleasure, and saluted him by the name of Pere Maurice. Never was the appellation of Father more justly bestowed, for the benignity of his looks and manner, plainly announced, that he considered all mankind as his children.— This amiable ecclesiastick I found was chaplain to the Marchionesses father, and now preceded that nobleman in a visit he meant to make his daughter.

Father Maurice brought some intelligence that affected the Marchioness nearly:—her eldest brother had been for some time in a bad state of health, and having neglected his complaint, it was now arisen to an alarming height, that baffled all the skill of provincial physicians. This circumstance has certainly nothing to do with the detection I spoke of, but my admiration

tion of Pere Maurice has led me farther than I intended.

Soon after his entrance I got a message from Dalton, requesting to see me immediately.—I hastily obeyed the summons, and found him in agonies not to be described.

“ Oh Sir, (cried he, grasping my hand forcibly) I must die! I go to receive the reward proportioned to my crimes.—Oh horror!—how shall I support the presence of an *omnipotent and offended Judge?*”

He looked upwards with a countenance of despair—I shuddered.—“ Dalton (cried I) your wounds are now in a better state than they have been for some time past.—Why then this sudden fear?”

“ It is too just (answered he, clasping his hands) half an hour ago, either in a dream or vision, I beheld the injured Fanny!—She was clothed in flowing robes of white, and surrounded by a troop of angelick companions.—I would have prostrated myself before her, but was prevented by an invisible hand.”—“ Dalton, (said she, in a tone of severe dignity) I have interceded for thee at the throne of grace—my petition has been unsuccessful.—I am the deceived, thou art the deceiver.—Behold my lot, and dread thy own!” “ She ceased, and I saw her no more!”—Oh horror!—is the sentence irrevocable! am I doomed to eternal misery!”

I at-

I attempted to reason this unhappy young man into composure, but his agonies rather increased than diminished. I then spoke to him of the assistance of the church,—"I have been bred in the Protestant religion, (answered he) and little as I have obeyed its precepts, I will not in my last moments add apostacy to my other crimes."—"Nor need you (said I, recollecting Dr. Wentworth) I will this moment bring you a clergyman of our own persuasion."

So saying I left the room, went back hastily to the Hotel de Liffon, and told my tale. Big tears rolled down the cheeks of the venerable Maurice, and Doctor Wentworth exclaimed—"Let us go this minute."

A few moments carried us to the wretched Dalton's abode. We were scarcely within his apartment, when exclaiming, "Oh God, what do I see!" he sunk down in the bed, and covered his face. Surprised at this action, and the words that preceded it, I turned to my companion—his countenance strongly expressed the different emotions of disgust, perplexity and compassion; he made one motion to the door, then quickly returning, "No, (said he) I am wrong.—HE WHO CANNOT ERR, has declared, that the worst of sinners shall be pardoned on repentance.—Why should I presume to limit his mercy?"

We now advanced to the bed. “You are come to reproach me, (said Dalton starting up) I know you are, begin, I have deserved it all.”

“Wretched young man, (cried Doctor Wentworth) I come not to reproach but comfort you—to speak peace to your soul,—to reconcile you to your God!—Say, was not there a period of your life and mine, in which I evinced a desire rather to serve than hurt you?”

“Oh unmanly,—Oh unchristian taunt! (cried Dalton) I have been wicked, I deserve to be reviled:—but have you been always virtuous?—You look surprised, Sir, (added he, turning to me)—You know not then the cause of my speaking thus:—Let me explain it—Doctor Wentworth is the person who gave me the fee for Mr. L——, (my second master) and whose evidence was bought off by the interposition of Woodville!”

“Woodville! Woodville! (cried I, almost breathless) What said you of Woodville?”

“Young man, (said Doctor Wentworth, calmly addressing Dalton) I have been unused to such charges as you make upon me, yet the ingratitude of your reply shall not make me repent a lenity, which has indeed, I believe been misplaced. To you Mr. Villiers, it is necessary I should clear

my character (now for the first time impeached) of so vile an aspersion.—I did indeed give him that fee in trust for Mr. L——, of which he speaks, and I suppose you are not unacquainted with the consequences; but that circumstance he mentioned, is so remote from truth, that on the contrary, Mr. Woodville joined his persuasions to those of Mr. L——, to induce me to appear against him on his trial, as I alone could prove the fact. Instead of complying, I absconded 'till the trial was over, which caused his acquittal for want of evidence.—So did I act, and this horrid and unprecedented charge is my reward.”

“Oh pardon! —pardon! —(exclaimed Dalton, flinging himself out of bed, and falling at Dr. Wentworth's feet) I have been most vilely deceived! I have been made to sin against God and you! — Oh Woodville, villainous Woodville! — thou hast ensnared my soul!”

“Woodville, again, (cried I, impatiently) is it Woodville, of Woodville Hall, in ——shire?” “The same,” replied Doctor Wentworth.

“Answer me quickly, (said I to Dalton) What business did Woodville employ you in?” “A most base one,” said he mournfully.—“Tisfe not with my impatience, much depends on your declaring the truth.”

“Then

"Then I will speak, and to my eternal shame!"—"In relating to you my unhappy story, I mentioned a will; it was Mr. Nelson's, he died possessed of an immense fortune, which he bequeathed to his only daughter, under no restriction whatever. I was witness to that will—and induced by the fear of an ignominious death, consented to set my hand to another, drawn by Mr. L.—, in Woodville's favour, and to the prejudice of the right heir. I have already told you the deception he practised upon my credulity, relative to this gentleman,—in fine, I consented to be a perjured wretch, and you are now acquainted with the whole of my crimes."

"Heaven be praised (said I) then all is discovered, and the villain shall be punished as he deserves."

I now explained the connexion between Lord Mortimer and Miss Nelson; and Dalton (after execrating Woodville afresh) desired that I would instantly procure a notary who should draw up his deposition in a valid form; as death might prevent him from giving his personal testimony in England.

That necessary step was immediately taken, and it was very late by the time Wentworth and I returned to the Hotel de Liffon.

There I related the foregoing scene; and Mortimer, who imagined by my confused

fused beginning, that I had discovered something of Miss Nelson's place of confinement, seemed considerably disappointed at the conclusion.

It was then consulted, what was proper to be done, and the result of our deliberations is, that we shall return to England the first moment my friend is able to travel, (as there are now no hopes of Mr. Fitzh—t's getting us the desired order) keep our discovery a secret 'till we arrive, and then at once burst upon the culprit, in all the terrors of conviction.

Adieu, my dear Lord,

Your's ever,

GEORGE VILLIERS.

LETTER

L E T T E R XIX.

(With the preceding inclosed)

From Miss CRAVEN, to Mrs. CRAVEN.

Portman Square.

A PRETTY affair come to light, read the enclosed, and then peruse my comments, which otherwise may seem a little ænigmatical.

So the great descendant of Julius proves a thorough-paced villain! The epithet is rather harsh to be sure, but he deserves it in its fullest latitude. O how I enjoy the thought of the storm's bursting over his head in the midst of all his fancied security!—Then Miss Eleanor, and her large fortune in expectation—Ha! ha! ha!—I must laugh, Madam; my mirth, though perhaps rather a little unchristian, favours very strongly of mortality, and I wish not to deny my nature.

Lady Morden, too, I assure you, notwithstanding all her gravity and goodness, sympathizes with me. She pretends now and then indeed, to hint something about

“ returning

"returning good for evil," not depressing those who are already fallen, &c. &c. But I immediately stop her, by putting her in mind of the time of her tribulation, when she was so ready to invoke a thousand left-handed blessings on Woodville's head.

Adieu, dear Madam, I am in haste now, but will write soon again.

LUCINDA CRAVEN.

LETTER

L E T T E R XX.

From Miss NELSON, to Lady MORDEN.

I WRITE dear Mariá, yet am uncertain whether my letter ever will reach you. The hope of seeing you is out of the question; I have no prospect, but confinement for life!—Yet my spirits are still unbroken, and I possess a fortitude, that is even astonishing to myself.

I now hasten to give you a narrative of what has befallen me since I left Woodville Hall.

Our expedition was indeed conducted in the †Wronghead stile. Mrs. Woodville, Cassandra, Dick and I went in the family coach, which was tolerably loaded besides, with provisions and finery. Mr. Woodville and Miss Eleanor followed in a hired chaise, and our servants preceded us in another. We stopped at ———, the first night, and next morning on coming down stairs, I found only my uncle in the breakfast-room. I enquired for the remainder of our party; he told me that Mrs. Woodville disliked travelling in the heat of the

† Journey to London.

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day, and not wishing to disturb me, had taken Eleanor into the coach, and set off betimes in the morning. I doubted not the truth of what he said, and we sat down to breakfast.

In fine, we proceeded in his chaise (as I thought) to London; at dinner time we took a slight refreshment, and then went on again: but I began to be alarmed at seven o'clock, when we should have reached town, I spoke to my uncle, he made some vague reply, and the chaise continued driving with excessive speed, 'till ten o'clock: at that period my uncle pulled the string, and enquired where we were, "Just going in to Canterbury," answered the postillion.

"Canterbury! (repeated I) for heaven's sake, what have we to do in Canterbury?" He answered not, and the vehicle soon stopped.

Astonishment and terror deprived me both of utterance and strength, and Mr. Woodville was obliged to take me out in his arms. He conveyed me into a house, near which our carriage stood, and a female servant conducted us to a private room.

Here having swallowed a glass of wine and water, the first use I made of recovered speech, was to ask why he had brought me to Canterbury.

He answered, I should know presently, and then ordering supper, dismissed the servant, and shut the door.

As

As soon as she was gone, he addressed me as follows.—“ I have no business here neice, save what a regard for your welfare gives me.”—“ Nay do not interrupt me” (for I was going to speak) “ Yes, I repeat a regard for your welfare.” Happy is it for you, that instead of being offended by your behaviour, (so far as not to concern myself more about your affairs) I have taken the salutary method of forcing you, to your good: and for that purpose am now going to convey you to a place, where (far from those pretended friends, who would advise you to act in opposition to my wishes, your dying parents commands, and your own true interest) you will with God’s mercy be brought back to your duty.”—

“ Stop Sir,” (interrupted I) do not profane the name of the supreme Being, by calling him to assist your purposes!”—“ I thank you in the name of my estate,” (added I in an ironical tone) for the great care you take of my welfare.” “ I know indeed that your very sincere regard for my fortune, induces you rather to wish it in your own possession, than in Mr. Stanhope’s, but unhappily my ideas are different, and I see no probability of their being altered for yours.”

“ Very well Madam, we shall see if your spirits will always continue as high as they

they are at present: perhaps the air of a nunnery may contribute to depress them."

"Not at all Sir, (cried I, with a forced vivacity) on the contrary, the novelty of the scene will be vastly amusing." At that moment, supper being brought in, prevented any further conversation.

You perhaps, dear Maria, may think my behaviour unaccountable, but I knew there was nothing to be gained by supplication, and indulged in the last resource of a wounded spirit, that of trying to torment the tormentor.

He took the precaution of locking me in for the night, and next morning we pursued our journey.

In fine, we crossed the channel, and he took such care to prevent me from speaking to any person, that I became totally ignorant of our rout. The sixth day after our arrival in France, we travelled near twenty miles without seeing a human creature, and shortly after entered a thick forest, which inspired me with some very terrible ideas—but a Gothick building which appeared through the trees, relieved me from them in part, and I judged this to be the place of our destination. I was not mistaken: the Abbess and Nuns, (for the building, was a convent) received us with much politeness.

I answered their civilities with a bow, but spoke not. Mr. Woodville then turn-
to

to the superior, intimated a desire to be in private with her a few minutes, as he had something particular to communicate—she made a sign to the nuns, who were going out, when I stopped them by a sudden exclamation.

“ Why this secrecy Sir, (cried I) surely you can have nothing to fear from your designs being known in this place—too well, alas! have you guarded against a detection!—but do not imagine that heaven will prosper your schemes—never yet did it suffer, fraud and hypocrisy to be practiced with impunity.”

“ Heed not the ravings of this imprudent girl, (said Mr. Woodville to the supérieure) she knows not what is for her benefit. To you, dear Madam, I commit the task of reducing her to reason; and let not any difficulties you may meet with discourage you from executing so good a design.”—“ Be assured I will do as much as lies in my power,” returned the supérieure!

“ Oh dear Madam! (cried I, throwing myself at her feet) indeed you are deceived—basely deceived!—I have committed no imprudence—I have offended no duty—I am brought here the victim of an avaricious design, which he (whom I blush to call my uncle) has avowed; yes, Madam, to my face avowed, though I doubt not he has abused your ear with specious tales of my imprudence.”

dence." "You will view my behaviour in another light, (said he, with an assumed air of moderation) when this good lady takes the trouble to convince you of your error." "Aye! aye! (cried the Abbess, with a sagacious nod) leave her to my care, I will teach her to regard your tenderness as she ought."

My spirits, now utterly forsook me.—
"Good God! (cried I) do you disbelieve me?"—I attempted to get up, staggered and fell to the ground in a fainting fit.

On recovering, I found myself on a bed between two nuns; one of whom supported me, while the other chafed my temples,—

"Where am I, (cried I, starting up) where is Mr. Woodville?" "Compose yourself, dear Lady, (said she who supported me, in a soothing tone) talk not yet awhile, we respect your sorrows, and will do every thing in our power to mitigate them."

"Sister! (interrupted the other, with an air of displeasure) what sorrows can the young lady feel in this mansion of happiness?" "She will soon be sensible, there is no need of mitigation."

Struck by this discourse, I regarded attentively them who held it: she who had seemed to espouse my cause, was young, and extremely beautiful; her fine features bore the marks of a deep, and heartfelt sorrow, and that expression interested me immediately in her favour. The other
seemed

seemed between forty and fifty, and had nothing remarkable about her, but a most forbidding severity of countenance.—

“Tell me, dear Madam, (said I turning to my favourite) tell me, for heavens sake, has Mr. Woodville, quitted the convent.”

She seemed doubtful what to answer.—

“Nay, do not pause,” (continued I bursting into tears) I am a poor betrayed creature, betrayed by him who should protect me, let me know the worst, let me know if he has utterly deserted me!——The superi-
eure entered that moment.

“What, my child! (said she in a fawning accent, and the same time taking my hand,) what! you still give yourself up to affliction—

You, who should on the contrary exult, for the evident interposition of heaven in your favour—Yes, my child, it has brought you out of the wilderness, to a land flowing with milk and honey, out of the crooked paths of satan, into the delectable ways of righteousness. You will be new born, if the detestable weeds of heresy have not taken too deep root in your heart, but no, so fair a form cannot long harbour such pernicious guests; the zeal of our spiritual director shall clean them away, and you will then be rendered all spotless within as all lovely without; a fit sacrifice for the Almighty! a fit spouse for your Saviour!”

I turned from her with disgust. “I feel” (continued she, imputing my emotions to
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a wrong cause) I see you are affected by what I have said. I discern conviction in that downcast countenance." (Conviction of what Maria? Here the lady's zeal evidently overpowered her understanding, for she had made use of no arguments to ensure this conviction, and surely the cause must always precede the effect) "We will not dispute that point now, Madam, (interrupted I) at present what concerns me most, is an interview with Mr. Woodville; can I not see him?"

"Your uncle!—alas, he went away, while you were in the swoon; but let not that discourage you; at parting he recommended you to me in these words—To you Madam, I commit this poor child—on you depends the security of her eternal welfare—I have no doubt of your inclination to discharge the sacred trust, and Heaven will, without doubt, endue you with the power. I must leave you, Madam, (added he) I cannot bear to see the dear child in this situation. I am sensible she would wish an interview with me, but as I also know what would be the subject of our discourse, I am willing to spare myself the pain of denying her request. He departed then, (continued the Superieure) after I had first assured him that nothing should prevent me from executing the pious task. Heaven I see (added she, lifting up her hands and eyes) Heaven, I see assists me!"

For a moment, dear Maria, I imagined she might have been imposed upon by my uncle, and therefore determined to undeceive her. I threw myself at her feet in a supplicating posture—"No Madam, (said I) Mr. Woodville is neither anxious for my spiritual or temporal welfare, he is too selfish to regard any thing that concerns not himself; had I not inherited a large fortune, which he seeks to gain, I should never have entered these walls. That religion which he now pretends to condemn, in which I have been bred, and which he is a disgrace to, that religion he has always professed, and does still profess; judge then if my conversion to another is the point he aims at. To you then Madam, do I commit myself, not in the sense he meant—of you I implore to restore me to my native country—to my real friends: Heaven will reward you for such a deed, and words shall not be all the acknowledgments I will pay.—Hear me, Madam, be not deaf to my entreaties, and may Heaven bless and accomplish every wish of your soul!"

"Arise, my sweet child (cried the Supérieure) I perceive you must be served in spite of yourself; I have already conceived a strong affection for you, and cannot help lamenting that such eloquence as you possess should be perverted to so wrong an use; but we will talk of this affair tomorrow (added she) you shall be now left to your repose."

these good sisters will help to undress you."

So saying she went to the door, and the elder of the nuns followed and spoke something in her ear. The purport of this whisper was explained by the consequence. "Sister Agatha (said the Abbess to the beautiful nun) do you follow me, sister Martha will stay with this amiable child."

The lovely Agatha obeyed, but stole a secret glance at me, expressive of the utmost compassion. I was now left alone with sister Martha, the cross devotee, for such indeed she proved. She harangued for half an hour after I had got into bed, on the inevitable damnation I should incur, if unmoved by the Superieure's exhortations.—She attempted not to allure me by reward.—She would have terrified me into the path of salvation.

Want of breath obliging her at length to stop, she relieved me from her presence; but repose was now out of the question, had I nothing to torment me but the horrible images she had drawn, they were sufficient to have precluded sleep: but alas! a greater and juster terror gave no room for the vain phantoms of the imagination. What indeed had I not to fear and to lament. My uncle had proceeded such lengths, that I had reason to think my life would be in danger, if he had no other obstacle to his base designs: even this, gave place to my concern, at being separated

from you and my Edward.—I painted to myself your grief.—I dreaded what yet I was ashamed to doubt, his constancy,—need I add that I spent the night in tears.

At day-break, when I had just began to doze into a kind forgetfulness of care, sister Martha entered.—“Well, Madam, (said she with a grim look) I hope my discourse last night had a proper effect on you?”

“It deprived me of sleep, (answered I much provoked at her unseasonable intrusion) and I suppose that was all the effect you expected.”

“Yes, Madam, I expected something more—I expected it would have forced you to meditate on the folly and wickedness of those abominable opinions with which you are infected.—But I fear you are hardened in sin!—that you glory in unrighteousness.”

“Whatever I glory in, dear Madam, returned I yawning) I would thank you just now to leave me to my repose: another time I will listen with attention, at present I am so drowsy, that I shall certainly fall asleep in the midst of your documents.”

“I fear you are incorrigible, (said she, lifting up her hands and eyes) I will however leave you as you desire.” So saying, she quitted the room, and indeed her absence was my ultimate wish, as her first saluta-

salutation had effectually driven away all inclination to sleep.

I then arose, and falling on my knees, besought the AUTHOR OF ALL GOOD to protect and preserve me. You know, Maria, I am not naturally enthusiastick, yet at that moment, I felt as if my soul had gained a new accession of strength. I then went to the window, tried to raise the sash, and succeeded; the morning was remarkably fine, the surrounding country more indebted to nature than art, and beautifully romantick; a large garden just underneath saluted me with the most odoriferous scents. —Sterne's Sterling came into my head, and I cried involuntarily, "I cannot get out! —I cannot get out."

But that idea brought not with it the depression of spirits I had felt the night before; "I will get out when it pleases God," said I to myself, and the reflection comforted me. I now went to examine what my apartment contained; in one corner hung a picture which represented the Assumption of the Virgin; it was really a very fine painting, and I was regarding it with a great degree of attention, when my tormentor entered again.

"Blessed sight, (cried she, making two steps back) your heart then is at last touched!" —She waited not for a reply, but hastily ran out of the room.

Having now satisfied my curiosity, I went back to the window, and was employed in gazing at that prospect I have mentioned, when I heard a noise at the door, and shortly after the superieure entered, followed by sister Martha, and a croud of religious, the first exclaiming, "Heaven be praised, but let us not interrupt her devotions."

She started back when she saw me.—
 "Sister Martha, (said she) what tale is this you have been telling me? Why have you attempted to deceive me?" added she in an angry tone.

"I have not attempted to deceive you, (returned Martha) I told you only what I really saw. This lady absorbed in a sacred transport at the sight of the blessed Virgin's effigies. God forbid Madam, that I should attempt to deceive you, for whom I have so profound a respect! I appeal to the lady herself to exculpate me from the charge."

"Speak my sweet child, (cried the superieure) confirm the blessed tidings, say has your heart been touched?" I know not what you mean, Madam," said I, affecting a look of astonishment.—"No did not our sister perceive you adoring the holy Mary?" No indeed, Madam, I admired the beauty of the painting, but not thing farther."

Sister

Sister Martha, at this disavowal, began to cross herself; the abbess smiled, and the nuns followed her example. For the future (said she, addressing the mortified Martha) I would advise you to be better assured of a fact, before you seek to make it believed; however, your zeal for this lady's salvation was certainly your motive, and shall be your excuse." "My dear, (added she, turning to me) which do you prefer breakfasting in your own apartment, or coming with us to the refectory?" "I am willing to do as you please, Madam," answered I. "Then it will certainly please me, to have as much of your society as I can." I bowed and accompanied her to the refectory.

There I again saw the beautiful Agatha, but her behaviour had undergone a total change from what it was the preceding night; she never once looked at me, though I frequently tried to catch her eye: not equally regardless were the other nuns, they beheld me with an appearance of the most prying curiosity, and I in return examined them. Some were excessively handsome, others in the contrary extreme, and all wore an appearance of cheerfulness, that in the major part seemed unfeigned.

"You see (said the Superieure) what a life we lead; secluded from the vanity and wickedness of the world, enjoying all the real comforts of existence, unmixed

with any of the pains, while our holy religion and vocation, ensures this happiness to be eternal; the affection I have conceived for you, induces me to desire you would share it with us.

“ I fear (interrupted the pious Martha) that the enemy of mankind has obtained too great a dominion over the soul of this young creature, to render your ladyship’s regard of any effect.”

“ You do wrong to interrupt me, (said the Abbess frowning)—learn I pray, what is due to your Superieure.”

“ Heaven is my witness (returned sister Martha, with much humility) Heaven is my witness I meant not to offend your ladyship: it was the excess of my zeal which transported me into this seeming disrespect.”

“ Indeed Madam, (said the fair Agatha) sister Martha would be the last person willingly to offend your ladyship: it was her just and pious abhorrence, of this young lady’s obstinate adherence to erroneous opinions that led her to interrupt you.”

“ Well, I pardon her. (said the Abbess. You do well, (added she, smiling graciously on Agatha) to intercede for your sister.”—Then turning to me, “ My dear Child, were you sensible how much I yearn for your salvation, gratitude alone, without the aid of conviction, would induce you

to be all I wish." She paused, and Agatha, as if inspired with some holy transport, exclaimed.—"Yes, Madam, Heaven will crown your endeavours with success!—this!—this!—(added she) accords with my last night's dream. I am well assured Madam, that you will be the instrument of saving a soul from perdition."

"Whatever be the particulars of your dream, (said the Abbess, affecting a look of infinite importance) reserve them for my private ear. Dreams are often the vehicles of sublime truths, and I have some reason, (from concurring circumstances) to think that yours is of that nature." As breakfast was now ended, I would have retired. "Stay my dear (said the Superior, in a few minutes sister Agatha shall attend you; as she is nearly of your own age, her admonitions may prove more agreeable than those of sister Martha."

I obeyed, though not quite so much delighted with my future companion, as I had been some time before.

The Abbess then whispered something in her ear, and suffered us both to depart. When we reached my apartment, sister Agatha looked eagerly around, as if fearful of being overheard, then shutting the door, and taking my hand, in a tone of infinite sweetness addressed me thus.—"I am, dear Mademoiselle, that what has just

passed, leads you to entertain a mean opinion of my understanding, and this fear gives me a very sensible pain, for I assure you, so prepossessed was I by your first appearance, and the subsequent words I heard you utter, that I would willingly possess as great a share of your good graces, as you do of mine :—let me hope my wishes may be answered by the following explanation.”——“ You saw sister Martha last last night whisper to the Superieure, and heard the latter retract what she had said before, of my staying with you.—All night my thoughts were employed in considering of some method by which I should be permitted to bear you company ; at length I fixed on that, I this morning executed, and you know how well it has succeeded.”

Heaven forgive me if I did wrong, but I cannot help thinking a little deceit allowable in the present case. Though I can render you no material service, I may help to mitigate your sorrow ; at least I promise myself more pleasure in your society, than I have experienced since my entrance into this house of woe, for such alas ! has proved to me ——A recital of my sufferings may teach you, that misery is not solely confined to your bosom, and I will not attempt to become acquainted with more of your affairs than you desire should be known, till time shall evince that I merit your confidence.” She paused, and

returned

returned her all the acknowledgements she so well deserved.

"Cease dear Mademoiselle (said she smiling, and putting her hand to my lips) we have no time for compliments, I will now give you some insight into the character of our Superieure.—Our religion, the most holy of all others—Nay, stop," cried she, for I was about to speak, "we will have no controversy, I am of the opinion of your countryman*.

"For modes of faith, let graceless zealots
"fight,

"His can't be wrong, whose life is in the
"right."

"Our religion, I say, has often been disgraced by the hypocrisy of its professors:—Of this class is the Superieure.——Avarice is her ruling passion, and the mark of piety conceals it best: possessing no fixed principles, she can with ease assume these, which are in their nature most incompatible; one moment she is lukewarm, the next a fiery bigot, then all indulgence to the errors of opinion.——In short, to gratify her prevailing propensity, she is become a perfect Proteus in conduct. And few, very few, are those who can see through the disguise.——Sister Martha's character,

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though

* Pope.

though more disagreeable, is also more estimable: naturally of a melancholy and sombre disposition, she has used herself to consider the SUPREME DISPENSER of ALL GOOD, as a terrible and ferocious being, who exacts from the subjects of his power, the doleful tribute of sighs and tears; seeing through this medium, she regards the most painful and shocking austerities as the sublimest duties of religion, consequently your sect which totally disavows them, is the object of her implacable aversion; her zeal therefore to rescue your soul from what she esteems a state of perdition, is praise worthy and sincere, though mistaken." As she spoke these words, we heard somebody treading softly outside the chamber-door; my new friend instantly changed her looks, her manner, and her voice, and began to expatiate on the joys of a retreat from the vices and follies of the world. The door opened in the midst of her discourse, and sister Martha entered.

"The Superieure desires your presence, Mademoiselle," said she to me. I arose, and went with her to the parlour, where I found that lady engaged in earnest conversation with an ecclesiastick, aged about forty. Both arose on my entrance, and the former taking my hand, led me to the latter.—"Here father, (said she) here is the young person I have been speak-

ing

ing of; use your endeavours to bring her out of the crooked path of heresy into the road of salvation; with such a guide as you, she cannot fail of attaining it, if her ears are not totally shut to conviction."

"You over rate my abilities, Madam, (said he, with an affectation of humility) yet by the assistance of Heaven I hope to prevail.—You Madam, can be witness of our conversation; I would have the whole community present also,—it may edify them."

Judge Maria what I felt at hearing this strange discourse, I spoke not however 'till all the nuns were assembled, then addressing myself to the father, "Permit me, Sir, (said I) to tell you, that you are much deceived if you imagine I am placed here for the purpose of being converted to your religion.—No, Sir, to the villainy of a relation who would wrest from me, my paternal inheritance, do I owe my present situation; I must also observe to you, that I will enter into no arguments on theological subjects.—I condemn not your religion, but I am well convinced that my own is a pure and a just one, and though my heart assents to this truth, I am too sensible of my own weakness, to take upon me the task of defending it.—My want of words may be imputed to a defect in my cause, and the puzzling of sophistry to conviction—pardon me therefore for, declining to
enter

enter the lists of argument, and according to the spirit of your function, intercede with the Lady Abbess for the STRANGER and the HELPLESS."

"Alas! (cried he, when I had done speaking) Satan is busy with this young sinner, I foresee I must have much trouble to make him forego his hold." He now harrangued me on the folly and wickedness of continuing in opinions, that he did not bring one argument to confute. I answered not, but my looks were sufficiently expressive of my disapprobation: at length tired of listening to such unmeaning jargon, I asked permission to retire of the Abbess.—She granted it, though not without some strictures on obstinacy and wilful blindness.

I had not been long in my chamber when the lovely Agatha joined me.—"My dear Mademoiselle, said she) you were rather too sincere just now; a little dissimulation would be necessary at this time; were you to seem more compliant, you would certainly gain more liberty."

"Father le Clerc is the Superieure's confidential friend, and she entertains almost as great an opinion of his eloquence as he does himself—consequently will not suffer it to be contemned with impunity.—I therefore entreat, dear Mademoiselle, that you will pay more attention to his discourse." I smiled at this period. "I know

know what that smile means, (resumed my new friend) but you are mistaken, though I sincerely wish your conversion, I am very sensible Father Le Clerc's rhetorick will never accomplish it; his oratory abounds more in tropes and figures than sound argument, and of course will never be productive of conviction; most generally indeed, the ornamental parts of his discourse overwhelm the subject matter, and few persons, who had heard only the conclusion, would guess at the beginning. Judge then whether I have any sinister design in desiring you to appear more attentive; yet I confess, I wish you to be of my religion, for though I think salvation may be gained in your's, I know that mine assures it.—And now (added she, with a more melancholy air) I am going to inform you of a circumstance that will surprise you:—though I wear the habit of a nun, I have not taken the vows:—Flattery, threats, and much actual cruelty, have not been sufficient to conquer my resolution of never impiously pretending to devote my heart to God alone, when it is indeed in the possession of a mortal!—but I will give you the whole of my unhappy story, when we are more free from interruption, and you will then allow"—At these words sister Martha entered, and I turned pale, fearful lest this poor devotee should have heard our discourse, but I soon became sensible

sensible she had not, by what she said;
 “ Sister Agatha, (cried she) the Superieure
 wants to speak with you, I will stay here
 ’till you return.

Agatha instantly obeyed, and Martha
 then turning to me, “ Well Madam, (said
 she) I will now shew you what may have
 more effect than my exhortations of last
 night; read that (said she) presenting me
 with a small volume, and dread the fatal
 effects of obstinacy.”

I opened this book, and found it well
 calculated for the meridian of sister Mar-
 tha’s understanding:—it was a history of
 the various punishments inflicted by the
 church upon hereticks of different deno-
 minations, and though deficient in stile,
 in good sense, and in christian charity, was
 extolled as the perfection of elequence by
 the enthusiastick Martha. The virulence
 with which it blackened and tore to pieces
 the characters of these unfortunate people,
 compensated in her eyes for all its other
 defects, and she was beginning to be pretty
 elaborate in its praise, when I stopped her
 by asking coolly, why she had desired me
 to peruse this work. “ Why! (repeated
 she) to shew what punishments are even in
 this world allotted for those who wilfully
 persist in heretical blindness.”

“ So then you would insinuate that I
 shall be burned alive! (cried I with a se-
 rious air) but I will know of the Superieure
 if

if you have authority for such an intimation." I arose merely to intimidate her, and it had the desired effect.

"Pray Mademoiselle, (said she) catching my gown, for the love of heaven, stay where you are! what I said was merely for your good; there is no necessity for the Superieure's knowing every thing; poor lady she has enough to mind in the management of the convent,—pray come back (repeated she more earnestly) At length, as if won upon by her intreaties, I consented to sit down again, but she attempted not to renew her old subject. Sister Agatha's entrance relieved us both. "The Superieure (said she) desires to know Mademoiselle, if a walk in the garden would be agreeable to you?" I answered in the affirmative. "Well then, (resumed she) I have permission to accompany you, we will go now." Martha muttered something of foolish indulgence, but we heeded her not, and proceeded to the garden.

"You may judge (said the amiable Agatha) that it was I who procured this indulgence from the Superieure; indeed my dreaming quality has obtained me so great a share of her good graces, that she can deny me nothing but freedom; and that, avarice, as well as dread of a superior power, prevents her from granting.— Were she to know the motive of my late request, she would heartily repent her acquiescence,

quiescence; but the privacy of the spot I shall lead you to, will preclude all possibility of our discourse being overheard."

She said no more, and we hastened to an harbour from whence we could discern any person who approached, and by that means were secured from a surprize. Here I informed her of every thing that concerned me, and of the motives of my uncle's behaviour: after expressing her pity for me, and her indignation against him in the strongest terms, she told me that about six weeks before my arrival (the exact time when he pretended to visit Nelson Place) Mr. Woodville came to the convent, and remained in private with the Superieure for a considerable time: when he departed that lady informed all the community, that she shortly expected a young person who had been educated in the protestant heresy by her mother, contrary to the will of all her other relations, who professed the true faith. She added that Mr. Woodville had been left her sole guardian, and had received an injunction from her father, to reconcile her, if possible, to the bosom of the church, and when he had accomplished this great point, to secure her conversion by engaging her to take the veil. The Superieure then admonished the sisterhood to join with her in the great work of salvation, with which Mr. Woodville had intrusted her. All promised to obey, and seemed

seemed to desire with impatience the moment that was to bring the expected convert.

“ I alone (continued the beautiful Agatha) entertained far other sentiments ; experience and observation had taught me to doubt the Superieure’s sincerity, and I was inclined to think the present tale partly the offspring of her own invention. About a fortnight before your arrival, the Abbess received a letter from Mr. Woodville ; she communicated the contents to us, with evident joy ; it contained a certain assurance of your coming.—You had then all my pity when I saw you, I felt something more—it was with difficulty that I concealed the concern I was filled with from appearing—you know the rest, but you know not (and I can scarce account to myself for the interest I take in your affairs) the first moment you appeared, I felt my heart yearn towards you, as to a long-lost sister ; and you may judge of the strength of my regard when I tell you, that though hopeless of quitting these gloomy walls—though my heart is dead to all pleasure but what I receive in your society, I would relinquish even that, rather than deprive you of happiness.”

Imagine, dear Maria what I said to this charming girl.—Your own feelings will best tell what was due to her. We now returned to the convent, fearful of incur-

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ring suspicion. The serious air my features had contracted, persuaded the Abbess that sister Agatha had obeyed her instructions, and not ineffectually: this idea made her redouble her expressions of kindness: *my dear* and *my amiable child*, were epithets lavished on me incessantly, and as she perceived the conversation of sister Martha displeased me, she enjoined her to cease tormenting me with it.

That injunction did not induce the pious Martha to behold me with more complacency; to make herself amends for the deprivation of speech, she conveyed a greater quantity of asperity than usual into her countenance; but as I now only saw her in company with the Superieure, I regarded not her looks, sufficiently happy to have escaped her tongue.

In two days the Abbess grew so immoderately fond of my company, that she would scarce suffer me a moment out of her sight; to the garden, to my chamber, she constantly attended me; so that sister Agatha was effectually prevented from giving me the recital she had promised.

Father Le Clerc visited me at stated hours. I listened patiently, and if I did not assent to what he said, neither did I contradict him. He seemed not perfectly contented with my conduct, but the Superieure hoped every thing from the zeal of

sister

sister Agatha, such wonders had the lucky dream wrought in her favour.

One morning the latter entered my chamber before I was quite dressed. She had brought me some beautiful apples, which were sent by the Abbess. I happened to cut my finger in peeling one of them, and opening my pocket-book to get a bit of sticking-plaister, a letter dropped out.—Sister Agatha took it up, and was presenting it to me, when chanceing to cast her eye on the superscription, she shrieked, and fell motionless on the floor.

Shocked and surprised by so unaccountable an accident, I scarce knew what to do. I raised her however in a little time, and putting her on the bed, sprinkled water on her temples, and held a bottle of eau de rose to her nose.—This application soon recovered her.—“Inhuman Comte! (cried she wildly) you can do no more! the worst is already past—be merciful, and by giving me death, put an end to all my miseries.”

“My dear Agatha, (cried I) look around—recall your senses—no Comte is here—nobody is present but me.”

“Oh Mademoiselle, (exclaimed she) leaning her head on my shoulder, and bursting into tears)—That letter, when did you receive it?—Where is the writer?”

“What letter, my dear?—compose your self.” Really Maria, my fright was so great

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at seeing her condition, that I had totally forgot the incident that occasioned it, and imagined her head was still wandering.

"Oh that letter, (resumed she) that letter on the floor!"——I picked it up immediately, and found 'twas from the unfortunate St. Pierre. My astonishment was redoubled.——"Who are you? (cried I, panting for breath, and starting up)—tell me for heaven's sake, tell me who you are!—is it—can it be possible—but no—she is dead."

At that instant entered the Superieure; judge of my vexation! "What is the matter—what has happened? (cried she hastily) Good God my dear child you are wounded!"

My finger indeed remained bleeding, for I had never recollected its' being cut, and now, it streamed pretty plentifully on the floor:—this at once presented an happy excuse; I told her, that sister Agatha had fainted, on seeing me cut my finger, she believed me, and the affair passed off.

Sister Agatha, however could not so soon recover herself; she complained of a headache, and asked the Abbess's permission to retire to her cell—She obtained it, and giving me a look which I perfectly understood, quitted the room.

The Abbess, and I, then went to the refectory, it being the usual hour for breakfast.—When that meal was ended, father

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Le Clerc desired our attendance in the parlour. Had he been a second Bossuet, or Arnauld, I should then have been unmoved by his arguments—my thoughts were solely engrossed by that morning's accident;—one moment I imagined sister Agatha and Mademoiselle La Aulay, to be the same, yet this conjecture was soon destroyed; when I recollected the billet that lady had written to St. Pierre, yet why those broken exclamations, and that fainting fit?—I could not answer the question, and remained in a state of the utmost perplexity. The Superieure, fancying my silence and serious air, proceeded from the attention I paid to father Le Clerc's discourse, could not conceal her satisfaction—"I knew—(cried she exultingly,) that this child's heart, could not be always shut to truth!"

"See father with what attention she hears you!"

Father Le Clerc, who was so engrossed by his own eloquence, that I believe after the three or four first sentences, he never once recollected, it was to me, his discourse (should be addressed) now bent his eyes towards me—"Yes Madam, (cried he in a pompous tone,)—heaven vouchsafes to make me the instrument of her salvation. I see it! I perceive it! (added he metaphorically) —Yes, I see Satan relinquishing his hold! —he is vanquished!—he flies!"

"Where

“Where! where! (interrupted the terrified Martha, falling on her knees.) Oh holy Father, drive him from us! banish him for ever!” She then began to ejaculate the Pater-nostre, but to her great disquiet, frequently forgot some of the words, and she tried to recollect them with such visible marks of anxiety, as if she feared the enemy of mankind, might take advantage of the slips she had made, and run away with her, at some favourable pause.

I burst into a fit of laughter, was it possible to refrain? the Abbess smiled, and the nuns, only waiting for that signal, followed my example.

Father Le Clerc, not prepared for this conclusion to his discourse, looked extremely foolish; anger, however soon conquered his confusion, but he seemed at a loss, whether to transfer it to the resible, or terrified party:—unfortunately for poor Martha, he judged her the fittest subject, as first offender, and accordingly after reproaching her in harsh terms for the ignorance and folly of her conduct, commanded her in a severe tone to quit the room—she obeyed with a mortified and humiliated air, but he resumed not the thread of his oration, judging from the preceding incident, it would have little effect.

I saw not sister Agatha ’till next morning, and then only in the presence of the Abbess; her looks declared, she wished as much

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much as I did, for a private interview. I perceived too she had been weeping, her eyes were red and swollen, and her whole frame betrayed the disorder of her mind. This appearance of affliction redoubled my wish to have the mystery solved; three days longer however was I kept in a state of suspense: on the fourth a nun came to tell me, that the Superieure being confined by indisposition, intreated I would stay in my apartment that day, and that sister Agatha should bear me company—I assented with a feigned appearance of mortification, at being debarred the liberty of going down stairs, and the nun departed.

In a few minutes sister Agatha entered: she flew to me; we embraced.—Every thing that had passed when we were last alone rushed into our memories.—“Tell me my amiable friend, (said I, are you the sister of St. Pierre?” “Oh no! I am not his sister!” Perhaps then you are some friend of Mademoiselle D’Aulay’s?”—“Alas, I am she herself!”

“Good heaven, is it possible!—did you not write a billet to your lover which you ordered not to be given ’till after your death?—he received it—and you are yet alive!”—“It is true,” replied sister Agatha, “I did write that billet, and unaccountable as all this may appear, I will soon explain it.—But first, dear Mademoiselle, first tell me, where you saw my lamented,

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Long lost illfated Claude!—does he yet live?—does he yet remember his Hortensia?”—

I now informed her of all I knew, and gave her his letter to peruse—She wept;—she leant her head upon my shoulder, and at length faintly articulated, “Faithful, unfortunate St. Pierre!—What have you not suffered!—Alas, What do you not still suffer!—and your Hortensia, never!—never more, must hope to behold you.—Oh cruel! Oh heart-breaking reflexion!”

A fresh burst of tears accompanied these words. I attempted not to restrain them, and at length she recovered sufficiently to tell me, what had befallen her from the time she last saw St. Pierre.—I shall give you the relation in her own words, and shall take it up from being placed in a coach and surrounded by a party of guards.

MADEMOISELLE D'AULAY's NARRATIVE.

" THE Exempt seated himself beside me, drew up the blinds, and the carriage drove off with incredible speed. All this time I had not spoke; my senses were utterly confused, even my breath was taken away: at length I recovered the use of speech; in a tone of the utmost anguish I asked my companion why I was treated thus? instead of answering, he attempted to take some unwarrantable liberties. I repulsed him, I screamed, I called heaven and earth to my assistance. Providence interposing struck him with fear, lest the guards should overhear me, and he desisted.

" My pretty Miss (cried he, in a taunting tone) you are strangely coy of a sudden; perhaps when you have been two months in a cloyster, you may cease to be so delicate."—" A cloyster, Sir! (cried I) are you carrying me to a Convent?"—" Undoubtedly Mademoiselle."—" And by what authority do you do this?"—" By that of a Lettre de Cachet, Mademoiselle; were there sufficient light (added the insulting wretch, I would give you the satisfaction of perusing it, but as there is not, I

hope you will take my word; I assure you I am a person of strict honour, and would scorn to deceive."—He added many more words which I do not recollect; I was soon indeed in a condition of not hearing or attending to any thing.

"There is something extremely dreadful in the sound of a *Lettre de Cachet*, which you who have lived under a free government, can scarcely conceive: my blood thrilled—my heart almost ceased to beat—when I heard that terrible word.—Good God (thought I) what will become of me—what will become of my dear Claude—of Madame des Estampes!

"I now sunk into a state of almost utter insensibility, nor was I aroused from it by our arrival at the gates of this convent.—My brutal companion, finding me unable to move, took me out in his arms.

"More dead than alive I was carried into the parlour. I sunk down on the floor and wept bitterly. The Superieure was present, I ventured to look up, hoping to discover some gleam of pity on her countenance, but I was disappointed, she seemed totally unconcerned, and only coolly desired me to rise.

"I attempted to obey her, my knees tottered, and I was forced to remain in the same posture. Two nuns then came towards me, and by their support I was enabled

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enabled to get up, and seat myself on a chair. I had no sooner done this, than a billet was put into my hands, which contained these words."

" YOUR presumption in expecting to
 " enter my family—*you*, who are but a crea-
 " ture of yesterday, has drawn upon you
 " a punishment you well deserve. By good
 " fortune I was informed of my son's ig-
 " noble design time enough to prevent
 " him from disgracing my blood, by an
 " alliance with a contemptible plebeian.—
 " Never more shall you behold him!—
 " And I leave you the consolation of think-
 " ing, that your friend—your Madame
 " Estampes, shall suffer too for your im-
 " prudence !

" COMTE DE ST. PIERRE."

" Judge Mademoiselle what I felt at reading these cruel words : the paper dropped from my hands, and I fell on the floor deprived of sense.

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“ When I recovered from this state I found myself in bed, sister Martha and another nun of a milder aspect were present; both attempted to sooth me, and both failed. I was in a fever before morning, my senses however forsook me not; what complicated my disorder was the afflicting intelligence of the death of my dear and valuable Madame Des Estampes; I thought this stroke as heavy as any I had yet received. I wept without ceasing, and at length such was the state of my mind and body, that I was pronounced in imminent danger.

“ I heard the tidings not merely without regret, but with pleasure. I wrote that letter you saw, a sudden pang prevented me from going on.—I vainly hoped it was the last, but heaven spared me for more misery: contrary to the presages of the whole community, I recovered, yet by slow degrees. I asked for my letter; the Superieure told me it was already sent to my lover. This gave me new grief, I painted to myself his situation; I fancied I heard him in a tone which pierced my soul, lament his Hortensia.—In fine, I spent whole days and nights in tears.

“ Time meliorated the violence of my grief into a calm and settled melancholy.—A sensible change took place in the Superieure’s behaviour; that cutting indifference with which she had at first regarded me, was now changed into an appearance of the most

most lively affection:—in short she then used the same arts that she now practices against you, and for the same end; to induce me to take the veil, and by so doing to encrease her own emoluments.—But the idea of my dear Claude rendered me proof against her artifices. I determined to preserve myself for him. I trusted in Providence that we should meet again.—When they found me resolute, not to take the veil, I was told he had fallen a victim to his father's cruelty; I imagined they spoke truth, and my heart was torn to pieces. I became ill again—again was at the point of death; and again the goodness of the Almighty preserved me.—Far, very far was I at that time, from thinking life a benefit, I loathed the light of day—I sought darkness and solitude. Often have I called on the spirit of my lover, and often has delusive fancy presented him, as answering to the invocation. Yet, notwithstanding my melancholy, my despair, I determined never to take the veil:—Hope was for ever destroyed, but resentment still lived, and warned me to avoid a step, that would have gratified my most cruel enemy.

“ At the time you arrived my resolution was beginning to alter.—Heaven sent you to my preservation, and to that Heaven I vow, never to abjure my lover while there

remains the smallest probability of seeing him again!—I have now to account for my present dress:—The superieure finding me inflexible to punishment or caresses, determined to insure my pension, which the Comte had promised to pay on my taking the veil, he was therefore told I had done so, and I became a nun in appearance.”

Thus ended the lovely Hortensia, and you Maria will judge how I was affected by her narrative:—While the Abbess was indisposed we enjoyed one another's conversation without restraint, but as soon as she left her chamber, that liberty was at an end.

Father Le Clerc, whom I saw almost every day, began at last to be dissatisfied with the slow progress of my conversion.—The Abbess also grew suspicious of sister Agatha:—We perceived it, and another lucky dream (in which my friend pretended she saw the Superieure extracting the black drop of heresy from my bosom, and treading Satan under her feet) restored all her former credit. For the first part of this vision we were obliged to Mahomet who with equal veracity declared he saw

the Angel Gabriel open his heart, and pluck from thence the spot of original sin.

But though the Abbess was now well convinced of my friend's zeal, she imagined her exhortations were not powerful enough to work the desired conversion.—Sister Martha therefore was again put into employment.

By the desire of the Superieure my friend feigned an indisposition, which was to confine her to her apartment for a few days: she gave me a hint of this matter, which prevented me from being as much surprised in reality as I was in appearance, at sister Martha being appointed to bear me company.

She began the assault with the usual topic of the eternity of hell torments, and the certainty of my enduring them if I continued in my present frame of mind:—she even enumerated the different species of punishment I should undergo.—Ashtaroth was to pour melted lead and oil down my throat; Beelzebub was to plunge me into a composition of fire and brimstone, and finally, Lucifer himself, was to use me as a footstool.

“ You describe the infernal regions so well, (said I, at this place) that I fancy you are not indebted to theory alone for your ideas: you certainly divert yourself now and then by paying them a visit; or at least those devils whose names you mention,

tion, must be your particular acquaintance."

This sarcasm seemed not very acceptable to my bigotted adviser, who, since the adventure of the picture, and Father Le Clerc's oration, had not beheld me with much complacence.—Her features grew distorted with rage.

"Take care Madam—take care! (exclaimed she) this levity on serious subjects will not do you much good. The Supérieure shall know how you treat me." So saying these words she flounced out of the room, and I more pleased at her absence than grieved at her anger, you will believe easily consoled myself.

When I went to the refectory, for it was then near dinner time, the Abbess received me with her usual smiles. Sister Martha too attempted to look chearful, but the sour turn her features had contracted by a long habit of ill-humour, would not suffer her to relax them for ever so little a time.

Nothing was mentioned of what happened in the morning, and at night sister Martha attended me to my chamber.—Merely to get rid of her I pretended to be extremely drowsy, and consequently hastened into bed: instead of reading me her usual lecture, she seemed to be busy about something in the room, and in a short time after went out.

As soon as she had left me I betook myself to my usual employment, thinking of my dear Edward and you. At length I became really sleepy, and rising to let down a part of the curtain, that hung at the bed's feet, (and which I imagined had been tucked up by accident) by the light of a dim lamp, which always burned in my chamber, I perceived what would have struck a bolder heart than mine with terror. A table covered with black cloth, stood just before me, and on this were laid in horrible order cross bones and a ghastly scull, which stared me full in the face.

I shrieked involuntarily, but my terror was not of long continuance; reason came to my aid, and I guessed that this pretty spectacle was contrived by the wise sister Martha, therefore recommending myself to the Almighty, I again courted the approach of sleep. I had just fallen into a doze, when my rest was most effectually broken by a strange and horrible noise at my chamber door; knowing well it was some new manœuvre of sister Martha's, I remained quiet, and scarce did day appear, when this indefatigable tormentor re-entered.

She seated herself on the bed, and I counterfeited sleep. "What Mademoiselle! (cried she) not awake yet?" I started,—
"I am afraid (continued she) that you

were disturbed last night, by your staying in bed so long."

"I know not (returned I, rubbing my eyes) what you call staying in bed so long: to me it seems not yet day—I have not been accustomed to rise so early." She looked disconcerted, but soon recovering herself—"And did not that spectacle affect you?" said she pointing to the skull. "It did for a moment, I confess."

"And did you not hear a noise?" asked she again. "Yes, but I knew you would not hurt me."

"Me, exclaimed she, (affecting an accent of surprise) how was I concerned in it?"

"I fancy you can best reply to that (returned I) but as a friend, I advise you not to take so much trouble for the future. I have long discarded the prejudices of childhood, and my confidence in the GIVER of LIFE is such, that I fear nothing but himself!"

My pious companion shook her head, and crossed herself, a method she generally takes when at a loss for an answer.

I will not tire you by repeating any more of her discourse, it is sufficient to say it was always in the same stile. Father Le Clerc assailed me every day, and at length vexed at his importunities, I candidly declared that I was too firmly attached to my

own

own religion, ever to change it for another; and again throwing myself at the feet of the Superieure, implored her to set me at liberty. Finding her still deaf to my entreaties, I hastily arose, and assuming a determined tone, told her that I doubted not but that Heaven would deliver me from her power, and punish the treachery of my uncle.

She seemed astonished at this sudden effort of my spirit, and turning to sister Agatha (who happened to be then present), honoured her with an angry glance. She continued silent however, and I retired to my apartment without any body's endeavouring to detain me.

In half an hour afterwards I was surprised to see my dear Agatha enter. She reproved me gently for my too violent sincerity; and then said, she had persuaded the Superieure and Father Le Clerc that they had taken a wrong method, that she had also undertaken to make a change in my sentiments, and they had consented to her accompanying me again.—“But, (added she in an arch tone) I cannot answer it to my conscience to betray my employers, therefore Mademoiselle make account from this moment, that you shall have a banquet of controversy.” She kept her word, and really Maria her arguments were infinitely more dangerous than those of the Superieure or Father Le Clerc, often

ten has my imagination been almost reduced, while my reason remained unconvinced, and so captivating is the siren, that to preserve my faith, I have been sometimes obliged to stop my ears.

The Superieure now constantly indulged us with a walk in the garden: one day when we were taking our usual promenade, I spied a breach in the wall, which was occasioned by some loose stones having fallen out the preceding evening, and which luckily was undiscovered by every body but me and my friend.

We went hastily towards it, looking around at every step; the strokes of a hatchet reverberated through the forest, (part of which skirts the garden) we peeped through the chasm, and saw a young man cutting wood; my heart palpitated with joy, so did sister Agatha's. A few efforts rendered the hole wide enough to suffer us to be seen.

The young man turned his eyes towards us, and we instantly made him a signal to approach: he obeyed, and I making him a sign to stop, took out my pencil and wrote these words.

“Whoever you are, I implore, I entreat, for the love of him who died to save us, that you will do the service I require:—Be here three days hence at the same hour, when I will give you

" a letter which you are to carry to the
 " next post town:—In earnest of future
 " reward I inclose a trifling sum."

Dreading interruption I hastily put these lines and five guineas into a handkerchief, and tying it well, launched it through the chafin.

I observed him pick it up, but would not stay to see the event, and sister Agatha and I returned to the convent. That night I feigned indisposition and retired to my apartment earlier than usual: fortunately for me Mr. Woodville had forgot to despoil me of my writing box, (which left Woodville Hall with the rest of my appurtenances) therefore instead of taking any rest, I wrote part of this packet.

Next day some letters were brought to the Abbess, she put one into my hands, it was from my uncle, and directed to me.—The contents were well calculated to undeceive the Superieure, if indeed she had been imposed upon. He insultingly enquired if I liked my present situation, which he concluded to be the case, as I had intimated no wish to change it. He added a threat, that if I did not immediately consent to marry my cousin, he would force me to spend my life in a convent, and make
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the world believe I was no more; by which means my fortune would be possessed by those who best deserved it.

I shewed this letter to the Superieure, in order to prevent her from pleading ignorance of my uncle's true designs in future. "There Madam, (said I) read that, and you will perceive that Mr. Woodville has deceived you as well as me."

After perusing it she lifted up her hands and eyes in affected astonishment.—"I have been deceived indeed! (cried she) but I am convinced my dear, that Heaven, which always works good out of evil, has obliged your uncle by an irresistible impulse, to act as he has done, and while he imagined he was bringing about his own Purposes, he was merely fulfilling the decrees of Providence."

Here was a turn Maria, which I did not expect: I replied not however, but retired for the purpose of answering this epistle; in what terms I did so you may easily guess.

Maria my lamp twinkles, and I must bid you adieu—Ah! I hear sister Martha.

L E T T E R XXI.

From Miss CRAVEN, to Mrs. CRAVEN.

Portman Square.

MORE news! more news! We have had a letter from Sophia, which I cannot send you, as it is gone on the wings of the wind to Paris.—She is alive, well and merry, but Heaven knows where, and she has met with the most romantick adventure!—St. Pierre's mistress, the beautiful Hortensia; what do you think of Sophy's finding her in the habit of a nun?—true as you are alive, and yet she is no nun; in short 'tis a mighty pretty, incomprehensible affair, and a little too perplexed for me to tell you.—So dear Madam, you must restrain your curiosity, 'till this delectable epistle comes back.—Adieu.

LUCINDA CRAVEN.

LETTER

L E T T E R XXII.

From Mr. VILLIERS to Lord MORDEN.

Paris, Hotel de Liffon.

YOUR letter and its inclosure, have been productive of more unravellings—but you shall hear;—one word of Mortimer first; he has neither spoken nor acted like a rational creature, since his perusal of Miss Nelson's letter.—Now for unravelling.

My wife shewed this last-mentioned epistle to the marchioness, they read it together, and at that place where the incident of dropping St. Pierre's letter, &c. &c. is related, the Marchioness gave a loud scream and clasped her hands.—Louisa turned towards her astonished——“Oh unfortunate Hortensia! (cried the former) dost thou yet live!” My wife still more and more surprised, regarded her with speaking looks, yet continued silent.—“Oh Claude! my dear, my unhappy brother!” resumed the Marchioness, bursting into tears. Louisa, who had been made acquainted with that melancholy tale, by Lady Morden, guessed instantly

instantly that our new friend was no other than the amiable Jacqueline. This discovery struck her with pleasure; she took the Marchioness's hand in hers, and pressing it to her lips. "I see then (cried she) the affectionate and heroick sister of St Pierre."

"Good God! (exclaimed the Marchioness) knew you my brother?" "No, (returned Louisa) but I have heard of him." She then gave a summary account of Miss Nelson's adventure in the wood, and its consequences.

The Marchioness wept anew at the recital—my Louisa bore her company, and both were in this situation when Lord Mortimer and I interrupted them. We were soon let into a part of the mystery, and since then Louisa has given us a more circumstantial detail, which encreases our admiration of the inestimable Jacqueline, almost to a degree of idolatry.

I will now tell you that part of the story with which you are unacquainted. The Marquis de Liffon was the young nobleman of whose attachment to his sister St. Pierre had spoken. He obtained her hand about the time that Miss Nelson met St. Pierre, and three days after the union, the Comtesse de St. Pierre expired. That event being totally unexpected (for though she was pronounced in danger, the physicians entertained some hopes of her recovery) struck the young Marchioness most forcibly,

cibly, and she had but just recovered from its effects, when our acquaintance commenced. I told you in a former letter that her eldest brother was apprehended to be in a decline, and now that matter seems past a doubt. The second served a campaign in America, and on the likelihood of peace, returned home and obtained the rank of Colonel in the Sardinian service, by the interest of a friend at that court.—He is now at Turin, and highly favoured by his royal master.

Dalton recovers daily, and seems to entertain a due detestation of the enormities of his past conduct. Doctor Wentworth has taken him under his auspices, and I think he may one day arrive at the character of a good man, though never of a happy one; for vice generally leaves an indelible sting.

LORD MOR'TIMER writes.

“Curse your sentiments†!—now is this cool-blooded fellow moralizing at the time I am ready to run mad, and good reasons (if a man may be said to have any for losing his senses) I certainly have.”

To discover the first and most cogent, re-peruse my Sophia's letter (when you can get it) Does she not say—“*my Edward*”
and

† School for Scandal.

and to a repetition of that name, has she not annexed the sweet, magick, harmonious vocable *dear* !

Now for the second—here am I tied by the leg, whilst I should be pursuing my journey to England.—The impertinent tribe of physicians and surgeons, who attend me, (and Villiers more impertinent and intermedling) have persuaded my mother, that if I travel in my present state, my wounds must infallibly open again : So to relieve her fears, I am obliged to bridle my own impatience, a task that would better suit the frigid Villiers, than your humble servant.

Mr. VILLIERS writes.

I have taken the pen from him again.—“ The frigid Villiers ! ”—I will prove my claim to a contrary appellation, by resenting this affrontive one ; and as the beginning of punishment, confine him to the walls of Paris this week to come.

Adieu my dear Lord,

GEORGE VILLIERS.

P. S.

P. S. The Marchioness has this moment heard a piece of intelligence that affects her nearly. Her second brother, (whom I have mentioned as being in the King of Sardinia's service) having had a quarrel with a brother officer, they agreed to decide it by arms, and the former was killed on the spot. Our amiable Jacqueline fainted on hearing the news, and has now locked herself into her apartment.

We cannot help (notwithstanding we grieve for her grief) considering this incident as a turn of Providence in favour of Claude de St. Pierre.

What a punishment for the Comte! to be obliged to look towards that child, he contemned and deserted, as the only remaining support and honour of his house.

LETTER

LETTER XXIII.

From Mr. VILLIERS, to Lord MORDEN.

Calis.

IT is now nine at night, and to-morrow we revisit our native shore.

Our parting from the amiable friends at the Hotel De Liffon, was such as it ought to be—the women applied their handkerchiefs to their eyes—the men shook hands, smiled, put on their hats, and drew them two inches lower than usual.

You must prepare to receive a large party, we have added Doctor Wentworth and Dalton to ours. The latter has now quite recovered his health, but the harassing sting of shameful recollection, still preys upon his mind. His deportment though melancholy, is polite; his person, if not remarkably handsome, is above mediocrity, and has an air of fashion rather incompatible with the character of an attorney's clerk. Doctor Wentworth improves upon us every day, nothing can exceed the benignity of his heart, or the refined simplicity of his deportment, he is indeed an Israelite without guile: to know him

him and Pere Maurice, is sufficient to make one despise those illiberal and indiscriminate satires which are every day levelled against a profession the most sublime and holy amongst men.—These two amiable ecclesiastics, have engaged in a mutual intercourse by letters; perhaps we may be one day favoured with a perusal of their correspondence; but my lord, do you not admire with me, that nobleness of soul and sentiment, which induces them to overlook the partial distinctions of sects (distinctions which have set the whole world a madding) and adhere wholly to that precept of their divine master's, which teaches an extensive philanthropy.—there comes Mortimer, and I must stop, or be abused for moralizing as he calls it.

Eight in the Morning.

I write at the breakfast-table; Mortimer snatches the pen——

LORD MORTIMER writes.

Hail, land of freedom! — thou whose
 whiten'd cliffs,
 Rising superior to the dashing wave,
 Aloud proclaim dominion! nurse of men!
 Let sickly Gallia boast her wide domains,
 Her

Her verdant fields with purple vintage
crown'd
Contemn them all—thy harvest, is of
heroes !

Mr. VILLIERS writes.

A very pretty rhapsody indeed, and extremely prudent, considering he has not yet crossed the channel—we go!—we go!—my Lord ! adieu.

GEORGE VILLIERS,

LETTER XXIV.

*From LORD MORTIMER, to the MARQUIS
DE LISSON.*

London.

My dear Lord,

THE interest which you and the Marchioness, so kindly take in my affairs, renders it unnecessary to apologize for troubling you with them now. I have got your letter in which you acknowledge receiving mine from Abbevil †; and I have fresh matter of gratitude towards you for thinking of me at a time when your Jacqueline is so heavily afflicted. May heaven restore her peace; that heaven which she resembles in purity and benevolence!

Our friends receive us with every testimony of pleasure. Lady Morden is a most amiable woman; her lord an ornament to his country, and a benefactor to society; in a word, one would imagine he was your brother.

It was late in the evening, when we arrived in town,—Villiers immediately dispatched a note to Woodville with the signature of A. F.—and containing an intimation that if he called at—Coffee

house

† Neither of these letters appear.

house at eleven o'clock next morning, he would hear something much to his advantage.—As he was equally unacquainted with my friend's hand as with his person, we entertained no doubt of his keeping the appointment.

Villiers, Lord Morden, Doctor Wentworth, Dalton, and I, went to the Coffee house at half past ten; we were shewn into a private room, and I bribed the waiter to tell Woodville (if he enquired) that one person only waited for him.

He was punctual to the hour: Lord Morden, Doctor Wentworth, Dalton, and I, retired into an adjoining closet and left Villiers to receive him.—After the first salute, and when the waiter had retired, my friend went to the door, locked it, and put the key in his pocket.—Woodville's cowardly soul shook within him, at this procedure; he looked around, with evident fear, and made several ineffectual attempts to speak:—at last—"Pray sir, said he, are you the writer of this note?"—Taking it out of his pocket—"I am," returned Villiers "And why this precaution, sir?" "Because I wish not to meet with interruption—and now to return your question with another, did you ever know a person of the name of Dalton?" "Dalton!—Dalton!" returned he stammering, while the guilty blood forsook his cheeks,—“your—your—interrogation is

very unaccountable,—I—I know several persons whose names I find hard to recollect, but I suppose (added he affecting courage) whether I do or not, is not now very material, except indeed you are curious to know the number of my acquaintance.”

“ Sir,” said Villiers, assuming a severe look, “ I mean not to trifle with you : I am interested about that unhappy young man, and I was bade apply to you for an account of him.”

“ Is that all, (said Woodville, brightening up,) let me see, (putting his hand to his forehead) Oh aye ! I believe I do remember something of him : is it he who was clerk to Mr. L—— ?” “ The same,” replied my friend.

“ Then sir I pity you, if you are nearly connected with that villain. You heard, I suppose, of the crime for which he was on the point of falling a sacrifice to the injured laws of this country ?”

“ I did ; and that he escaped for want of prosecution.—You too I heard, had some concern in saving him ?”

“ It is very true sir, I represented to the gentleman whom he had defrauded, what a pity it would be to cut him off in the flower of his youth, I added some more persuasive arguments, continued he, winking significantly,) money sir, money is the primum mobile ;—it will incline the judge

and the evidence too, to mercy, and send justice adrift."

"To you then Sir, I am indebted for the life of my kinsman; it was you who lent your wealth and your power to assist him, and did so unactuated by any other motive than common humanity?"

"Alas Sir! my heart was always full of the milk of human kindness! but would you believe it, this—I know not what to call him, he is your relation, and I should be silent."

"No—pray speak sincerely."

"Well then,—this wretch betrayed a wish of going to a foreign country, where his shame might be concealed, I supplied him with money for this purpose—I made him constant remittances whilst his behaviour deserved it, which indeed was a short space of time. He associated with a set of sharpers, and joined with them in plundering the publick: his depredations were not confined to the gaming table, he proceeded to high way robbery. At the beginning, I ventured to expostulate by letter on the folly and wickedness of his conduct. He returned me an answer couched in the most abusive language, and disclaiming my friendship or assistance, you may judge, sir, that after so gross an instance of ingratitude I troubled him with no more admonitions; and in a little time I had cause to accuse myself for my former mistaken

mistaken lenity; he and his dissolute companions after a series of rapine and murder, were at length apprehended and I suppose received the reward due to their crimes."

"You know not then, if he is yet alive?"

"No sir, for I have never inquired,"

"Well (replied Villiers) there is a person in this closet who can give us some information." This was the signal agreed on, and we all rushed out. I can give you no adequate idea of Woodville's confusion, horror and astonishment, at the sight of Dalton and Doctor Wentworth, I almost pitied the wretch, and going towards him, "Your fraud is discovered, said I, restore Miss Nelson, to liberty, and all shall be buried in silence; otherwise you see, I can, by forcing you to do her justice, render your infamy publick."

"What infamy? (said he recovering himself,) what infamy do you mean? is the testimony of such a wretch as this—to be believed against me? Be assured, my Lord, I scorn your threats, I fear not to be done justice to, if the affair comes to a tryal—"Aye! aye!" cried Villiers sneeringly. "Money! money! is the primum mobile, it will incline the judge and the evidence too, to mercy, and send justice adrift." The guilty wretch was for a moment abashed; but his effrontery return-
ing

ing as quick; Hark ye, my Lord said he, whispering in my ear, Miss Nelson, is still in my power, and be assured I will not fall alone!"

Never so strongly as at that moment, did I feel the inutility of theoretical reasoning. My soul was fired with indignation, the words—"base villain!" burst from my lips, and I half drew my sword from the scabbard, when a sudden recollection how much Miss Nelson was really in his power turned my rage into terror; he seized that favourable moment—and made a motion towards the door, Villiers fearful of my committing some rash action, instantly opened it, and suffered him to depart, so ended our interview, and I scarce knew how to proceed, on the one hand his vile intimation froze my soul, and I dreaded making use of any coercive measures, lest sudden desperation might urge him to commit a deed I shuddered but to think of.

I am still in a state of surprise and anxiety, I know not how to act, and as I can write of nothing but my perplexities, will hasten to relieve your Lordship, by subscribing myself your faithful and oblig'd friend

MORTIMER.

LETTER.

L E T T E R XXV.

From Miss CRAVEN, to Mrs. CRAVEN.

Portman Square.

THOUGH I leave town so soon, I cannot forbear giving some account of an occurrence which I think will be productive of service to our friends.

Last night we were all at Drury Lane theatre, to see a new comedy, of which I should say something had I not matters of more importance to treat of. Mrs. Stanhope requested Lord Mortimer's attendance, and he, (who with all his gaiete de coeur is a pattern of duty) immediately complied though rather in the dumps, from the recent scene with Woodville.

The fourth act was just finished, when a most astonishing riot began in the middle gallery; and the cry, of "Throw him over! throw him over!" was repeated several times: our eyes were immediately turned to the place from whence the noise proceeded, and who do you think we saw, struggling with three or four men, but that curiosity Dick Woodville!

Mortimer

Mortimer flew out of the box; Villiers followed, and shortly the house became quiet. Villiers returned to us alone; we all asked in a breath for Lord Mortimer; he answered smiling, that he had quitted the house in company with an old acquaintance.

The smile raised my curiosity (which is generally pretty alert) and I asked what he meant. "Literally what I said, (replied he,) but you ladies who value yourselves on your penetration, are always fancying mysteries where there are none to be found."

"O your servant! (returned I,) so then that opinion of my penetration, is confined solely to myself; but I will convince you I possess some in reality, by not seeking any longer to know, what you are dying to discover."

Thus we trifled 'till the entertainment concluded, and on our return home, found seated very quietly by the fire side, Lord Mortimer and Dick Woodville. "Dick Woodville here!" (exclaimed I aloud) "Yes ecod, 'tis I sure enough", cried he, scratching his head.

Mortimer now arose, and taking his hand—"Miss Craven, (said he) as well as all this good company, will I am sure congratulate me on the recovery of an old friend, whom I feared was for ever lost."

Here

Here every body bowed, and Dick grinned with delight: he then went round the room, nodding to one, treading on the toes of another, and to my arm gave such a shake, that I almost fancied it dislocated.—“ I’ll tell you what Miss, (said he, in concluding this gentle salutation) father’s an errant pickthank! do you know that he kept dinning my ears with a parcel of stories that My Lord, Mr. Stanhope that was, tells me, hadn’t a grain of truth in them; and I, like a great overgrown calf, believed every word, old squaretoes, and that envious puss, (I mean Sister Nell,) said, though I mought ha’ known she had a month’s mind to my Lord herself. Howsomever their slim flams won’t do ’em a bit of good—ecod I’ll blow up their schemes, that I will!” He now stopped to take breath, and we sat down. “ Prythee Dick, (asked I a little after) what was the meaning of your Sister Cassandra’s odd behaviour the morning I went to see Mrs. O’Flaherty?” “ Oh ecod, and that’s a good joke enough!—Why Nell and she, were closetted one morning before we came to London; what they were chattering about I did not know ’till a great while afterwards, but Cass looked plaguy grum all day, and held her head for all the world as if she’d a furze bush under her chin. Well, cousin Sophy asked her very kindly what was the matter, and then she
gave

gave a great flounce like a salmon, and making as many ugly faces as if she was taking physick, muttered some grand words, that the devil nor Doctor Foster could not understand. So this was the way my Lady behaved till Miss Sophy was gone; then when we came to London, she began to be better humoured: but one day she and Nell, fell together by the ears about O'Flaherty, (and this was after you saw her) Cass said something about ignorance, and Nell answered in a great passion, that as ignorant as she was, she did not tell a parcel of foolish stories to people that made game of her, and said she, I can't blame any body for laughing, when you talk such a deal of silly stuff. What more they said, I could not make out, for they were both so angry that they gabbled like two turkey-cock's."

Thus ended Dick's narrative, which had entertained us considerably; and in the course of conversation he declared, that his father had told him he was publickly ridiculed by Lord Mortimer (then Mr. Stanhope) and that his manners and discourse afforded a constant jest to my Lord, Chapman, Sophy, and your humble servant.

Dick declared he did not believe all this, till his father shewed him a letter subscribed with the name of Stanhope, and which painted him in the most ridiculous colours;

colours; and this was the cause of that behaviour which puzzled us so much to account for.

Dick, vowed vengeance on his father for deceiving him, but Lord Mortimer persuaded him to restrain his resentment for some time, and to say nothing of his present reconciliation with him. Adieu dear Madam; I am tired of scribbling, and besides must hasten to dress for dinner: Dick is amongst the number of our guests.— Expect to see me some day next week, and believe me your truly affectionate

LUCINDA CRAVEN.

LETTER

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LETTER XXVI,

*From the Marquis DE LISSON, to Lord
MORTIMER.*

Chateau De Lissou.

MY Jacqueline sympathizes in your perplexity ; and would herself write to convince you of the interest she takes in your affairs, were it not for the bad state of her father's health, who is now with us, and requires her constant attendance.

The Chevalier is at Barege, and declines very fast. The Comte's indisposition proceeds from the shock he received on hearing the intelligence of his second son's untimely death. All those circumstances have destroyed Jacqueline's tranquillity, and I fear, very much fear, that her health will suffer with her spirits.

The Comte's pride of heart, seems to encrease with his illness ; he will not suffer us to speak of the unfortunate and amiable Claude. He probably does not imagine himself in danger, and therefore defers the moment of repentance as long as he can :—
Strange that he will not make himself an
interest

interest in the breast of his son, before it be too late.

I have a request to make you my friend: enquire for Lord Beaumont (as an English peer, his residence cannot be unknown) for several months past, I have received no answer to the letters I have frequently written to England; I conclude therefore that they have miscarried. If we could prevail on our dear Claude to return to a country he has so much reason to detest, I would surprise the Comte into a meeting with him. — Nature, remorse, every thing would work powerfully in his favour.

Adieu my Lord——Jacqueline bids me assure you, that you have not in the world truer friends than her and

Lisson.

P. S. Assure Mrs. Stanhope, and Mr. and Mrs. Villiers of our constant good wishes.

L E T

L E T T E R XXVII.

From Miss NELSON, to Lady MORDEN.

A GAIN I address my beloved Maria and I fear for the last time. My persecutions have encreased since I wrote last. I am no longer permitted to see sister Agatha ; I ~~even~~ fear she is removed from this convent.—Ah Heaven ! what—what will become of me ?

Dear Maria ! shall I see you no more !—My Stanhope, yet why should I call him mine, if I were even at liberty, I could not give him my hand—then why lament an absence that is perhaps beneficial to both ? Yet Oh Maria, can I derive any consolation from the idea of his inconstancy !

Some days after I dispatched the packet to you, Hortensia and I were sitting in my chamber at a time when we imagined ourselves safe from interruption.

It was the hour sister Martha usually allots to her supernumerary devotions, for not content with joining the sisterhood in prayer at the accustomed times, she dedicates a part of the day to that purpose in her cell. We were talking over past occurrences, and laying schemes for the future,

ture, when the door suddenly burst open, and sister Martha entered.

“What! (cried she to Agatha) is it thus you discharge the trust reposed in you? be assured you shall answer this duplicity to the Superieure! I knew what her indulgence would come to!—but no, I was a fool to be sure! my suspicions were those of a distempered mind, and therefore not to be regarded; now is the time to know which is most worthy of her confidence, you or I. And you Mademoiselle, must be again contented with the disagreeable sister Martha (so indeed I had called her, in this unlucky conversation) for your sole companion.—I will serve you in spite of yourself, though Heaven knows the task is no pleasant one!”

So saying she flounced out of the room, without our having power to stop her.—In some minutes she entered again, and the Superieure with her.

The storm now burst on Hortensia, who tried to defend herself but in vain.—At length I interfered.—“Madam, said I, turning to the Superieure, you condemn yourself in reproaching my friend. She has acted as humanity and good nature dictated. I wonder not indeed at your resentment against a conduct so contrary to your own.—Be assured however, that you will one day repent of your injustice. I have

have friends Madam; who will not tamely see me injured—detain me therefore at your peril! I am a British subject, and you have no right to controul me!”

Thus far I had proceeded, when the Superieure not deigning or not able to answer, quitted the room, commanding sister Agatha to follow.

I omit a detail of what I suffered the following days, as it would only inflict unnecessary pain on your affectionate heart.—Fortunately they had discovered nothing of the letter I had written; I therefore encouraged a hope of such another opportunity; but all my schemes were baffled for some time. A letter from my uncle at length arrived, and procured me more liberty; I am ignorant of the contents, and can judge only by the effects. I am now permitted to walk in the garden, but always in company with sister Martha.

I must not omit one circumstance which may prove useful; from some discourse I the other day overheard between Father Le Clerc, and the Abbess, I am tempted to think myself in the vicinity of A——.

I have written this by a few sentences at a time for fear of discovery. If I find an opportunity I will dispatch it even unfinished. I am extremely afflicted about Hortensia; I know not what punishment the cruel Superieure may inflict on her; and

[186]

and I, born to give pain to those who love
me, am the fatal cause.

* * * * *

Maria, I have but just time to tell you,
that I have found the opportunity so much
wished:—you may see I write this with a
pencil,

Adieu, Adieu.

SOPHIA NELSON

LETTER

L E T T E R XXVIII.

From LADY MORDEN, *to* Miss CRAVEN.

Portman Square.

MY Lucy, you will be surprised when I tell you Lord Mortimer is gone, Heaven knows where! but I have a shrewd guess for all that. The enclosed from my dear Sophia, reached my hands four days ago.

Lord Mortimer was by when I received it:—"From my Sophia? (exclaimed he) quick, quick, Lady Morden! instantly open it!—how is she—what does she say? He was running on with half an hundred questions, when observing a tear steal down my cheek, he snatched the letter out of my hand, and eagerly perused it.—"My Sophia, (exclaimed he, at that part where she speaks of him) great Heaven, does she suspect my truth, my constancy, my unabated love." He then read on in silence to where she mentions A——. "Ha! (cried he, starting) then there are hopes! read!—read, dear Madam—See my Sophia's found!"

He

He put the letter into my hands, and Mr. and Mrs. Villiers, Mrs. Stanhope and Lord Morden coming in, I was requested by all to peruse it aloud. When I had ended, Lord Mortimer flew to Villiers and embraced him; nay, I believe he would have paid us all the same compliment, had not Villiers checked his transports by observing, that Sophia might have been mistaken in her supposition of being near Orleans, as indeed she had not spoken positively of the matter herself. He then went on to demonstrate the folly of suffering the imagination to take the lead of judgment, &c. &c. &c. To all which Lord Mortimer did not very patiently attend; but suddenly taking up his hat, flew into the street, and returned in a few minutes with Doctor Wentworth and Dalton, who had been riding.

In the evening he walked out, accompanied by Dalton and Dick Woodville, who dined with us; they returned not till very late, and the former had an air of satisfaction in his countenance, which it wore not in the morning.

Next day we saw very little of him, and the morning after, as we were sitting at breakfast, and wondering at his absence, a servant brought in a note without any direction, which contained these words.

“ That my good friends may not entertain any unnecessary fears on my account,
“ I think

" I think it right to inform them I am
 " perfectly safe. Dalton is with me, so is
 " Dick Woodville; we will return toge-
 " ther.—Let not my beloved mother tor-
 " ment herself with vague conjectures.—
 " I again repeat I am safe.

" MORTIMER."

We all join in thinking he is gone to
 A——. Heaven grant him success. Four
 days have elapsed since his departure; the
 moment we hear from him, you shall, 'till
 then adieu.

Yours ever,

MARIA MORDEN.

LET.

LETTER XXIX.

From Miss CRAVEN, to Lady MORDEN.

Belmont.

I AM extremely pleased with your epistle; you have regained your spirits, and I really would not desire a prettier correspondent: the penseroso stile is not at all suited to my taste, and no wonder, for melancholy does not become me. In my most triste moments mirth and sorrow struggle so strongly for pre-eminence, that my features become absolutely distorted in the conflict.

Not only the manner but the matter of your letter pleases me excessively; Lord Mortimer is so charmingly romantick, so foolish, and so quixotish, that I admire him prodigiously.

Chapman has fared the worse for my penchant: he entered while I was conning your eloquence: with well dissembled confusion I crushed the paper, and hastily put it in my pocket; but I do assure you, the creature bore this manœuvre as well, as if it had been put in practice by his grandmother,

ther, and uttered some ridiculous speech with which I have not burthened my memory.

My reply was the interjection "pshaw!" in no very good humoured tone, for I was really provoked at the man's apparent composure, when I expected to see him fall into all the jealous transports or an Orontes.

"If you are engaged Madam, (drawing back with a stately air) more agreeably than by my conversation, I shall not presume to interrupt you:—that letter perhaps."

"You are right, (answered I, willing to see a touch of heroics) I was indeed most delightfully entertained before your entrance."—"O very well, Madam! pursue your employment," and he made but three steps to the door. My mother met him just as he opened it.—"Chapman, where are you going?—you dine here, I hope."—"I shall be happy to oblige *you*, Madam,"—the *you* pronounced with a particular emphasis.

"And me only, Chapman? What, I suppose Lucy has been playing over some of her tricks, but you should not mind her, she is a child, and does not know what she would be at."

"O dear Madam! do not give me the merit of influencing Mr. Chapman's behaviour; if there has been a quarrel, 'twas of his own seeking, and I dare say he imagines these lordly airs become him infinitely.

finitely.—I do assure you I only gave him to understand, I was much entertained by a letter he found me reading, and presently he flew into the most outrageous passion.

“Is this true Chapman?” asked my mother. “In part I confess Madam; but the manner it was uttered in.”——

“O Sir, (said I, assuming a mighty grave air) I am sorry my manners do not please you; be so kind as to inform me how to amend them; I am open to conviction, are you ready to begin your instructions? How shall I comport myself? gaiety you exclude, grave, solemn, dismal, I suppose,” and I put on a most woe-be-gone look.

“Be yourself only! (exclaimed he, forgetting his anger) be yourself only, and then you cannot avoid being charming.”

But were I to repeat all the fine things he said, you would not be pleased, nor I neither, for really this sort of conversation in repetition, is like the smell of hot meat when one has dined. Is not my simile delicate and charming?—I dare say you would not have thought of it: let me alone for wit and all that sort of thing.

Here is a delectable bit of an epistle! if it affords you half the entertainment in reading, it has given me in writing, you may put it in the fire. You will not wonder at the brilliancy of the stile, when I tell you it is now one in the morning, and I of course half asleep.—Bon soir ma chere amie.

L——C——

L E T T E R XXIX.

*From Mr. VILLIERS, to the Marquis De
Lisson.*

YOU will be surpris'd to hear, my Lord, that Mortimer has again quitted England, and is now in the same country with you. A letter from Miss Nelson is the cause; she mentions a circumstance which induces her to think she is near Orleans, and Mortimer ever impetuous, is determined to try.

I blame not his design, but I am hurt beyond expression at his want of confidence in me; where there is any concealment, there can be little real friendship. I cannot accuse myself of hiding a thought from him since our first acquaintance; why then should he be more reserved to me? There can be one only cause—want of affection, but I will not longer trouble your lordship with my complaints.

I am truly concerned to hear of the Marchioness's depression of spirits.—Heaven protect one of its best works!

What you say of the Comte's inflexibility of temper, does not surprise me, accustomed to fancy his prejudices highly reasonable, and his pride of consequence commendable, he thinks it would be a derogation from the dignity of his character,

to recede from either; not till death draws the veil, will he discover his mistake.—

Mortimer was not unmindful of your request about Lord Beaumont; he and I (soon after receiving your last letter) went to his town house. As we had no personal acquaintance with his lordship, we were ignorant of his motions;—his domesticks answered to our enquiry, that he had quitted England three months ago, and was at present in Italy, but that his agent could alone give certain information of his place of residence, and he was now visiting my Lord's estates, and was not expected to town in less than a month.—To our request for his address they answered, that it was impossible to give it, as they did not, with certainty, know which of the estates he was at.

Unsatisfactory as this was, we were obliged to be content, but your lordship may be assured that my enquiries shall not cease.—I will try to discover some of Lord Beaumont's acquaintance; a man of his rank and fortune must have many.

Adieu, my Lord, all our society bid me say every thing tender and affectionate to you, and the amiable Marchioness, let me throw in my mite, by assuring your lordship that I am your most respectful and obliged

GEORGE VILLIERS

LETTER

L E T T E R X X X.

From Lord MORTIMER to MR. VILLIERS.

A——.

I DOUBT not George, but you are highly offended at my seeming want of confidence, as in the same case ignorant of particulars, I should be with you.

The weight of my arguments will certainly mollify your resentment, if my epistle does not meet an untimely fate by being cast into the fire; to prevent which untoward circumstance, know I have found my Sophia! that is, not absolutely found her, but I am acquainted with the place of her retreat, which amounts to the same thing; for by earth, air, and skies! the dear charmer shall be folded in the arms of her faithful Edward before a fortnight comes about!

There! if you are still in the same temper you began my letter with, e'en tear it to pieces without perusing another word; on the contrary, if your brow begins to relax, go and you will find my reasons for keeping you in the dark.

K 2

Tell

Tell me George, if you had accompanied me, (and such is thy headstrong friendship, that I know thou wouldst, hadst thou received the least item of the affair) tell me I say, what would have become of thy and my Louisa? I know the sensibility of her nature, I know her soul is wound up in thine, and that on thy safety depends her happiness.—Sensible of all this, should I not be a pretty fellow to make thee partner of all my schemes, at a time too, when she is on the point of giving thee a pledge of her love: the alarms inseparable from her situation, joined to those on thy account, would be too much for her tender frame to support. These were my reasons, believe them, and forgive me.—Supposing this to be the case, I hasten to recount my proceedings.

My billet told you that Dalton and Dick Woodville were my companions; it was necessary to have some, and these I could trust. As a journal of travelling post, eating and sleeping, cannot be productive of much amusement, I bring you at once to A——.

It was night when we entered, and consequently too late to go upon the search; I enquired however of my host, who was extremely communicative, what convents there were in the environs, their situation &c. &c. He named several, and told anecdotes of each, but this did not satisfy me.

all those he had mentioned were too much frequented, and too public to answer my Sophia's description. I pursued my enquiries, and learned there was a convent twenty miles from A——, in a very retired situation, that it received scarce any visitors, and took no boarders — This was enough. Next morning I took my host's direction, and Dalton, Dick and I, sallied forth upon our knightly enterprize.

We had proceeded fifteen or sixteen miles, when we came to a small cottage: a thought struck me that we might here get a guide to the convent, and I instantly dismounted. — My companions waited outside, and I entered into conversation with the mistress of the house. — I had begun to ask some questions about the convent, when a young man come in laden with billets. — “ Jacques, (said the old woman, addressing me, and pointing to the young man) Jacques can best tell you, for he cuts wood every day in a forest that skirts the garden of the convent.”

Judge of my joy, Villiers: — I instantly conjectured this Jacques to be my Sophia's messenger; nor did I mistake. His mother no sooner intimated to him the subject of our discourse, than he turned to me and said, “ Nobody, Sir, can direct you better than myself, but few visitors are ever received at the convent, and fewer still ever go there: I know but of one this

long time.”—“And who was that my good lad?”—An English gentleman I believe, Sir; there was a young lady with him who seemed to weep, but I could not well tell, as I had only a glimpse in passing.”

“A young lady, did she return?”—

“O no, Sir, the gentleman came back alone.”—“Tell me, for God’s sake, (cried I) did not you receive some letters from a young lady in that convent?”—“I did, Sir, but how could you know?—may be I am doing wrong.”

“Oh no! you are my preserver, the preserver of my Sophia,” cried I hugging him. The poor fellow seemed extremely abashed, and so did I on observing all the people present, regarding us with eyes of astonishment. I recovered my reason by degrees, and taking Jacques aside, put ten guineas into his hands. “Accept this (cried I) as a small part of what I owe you, be as faithful to me as you have been to that lady, and I shall think no reward too great for your services.” I then acquainted my companions with what I had heard, and proposed we should leave our servants and horses at this place, and proceed to the convent on foot; they consented, and Dick testified his joy at the intelligence in his own way, by shouting and hallooing.

We now proceeded, guided by the trusty Jacques. He informed me, that the garden

gardener of the convent was his acquaintance, and that they had often lamented together the fate of the pauvre demoiselles, who were confined in that place; the gardener declaring, it was just as foolish to prevent such a number of fine women from fulfilling the purpose of their existence, as it would be for him to put a parcel of beautiful plants into a wooden box without earth or water. "Indeed (added Jacques) I thought locking up the women the most foolish thing of the two."

We were now entering the forest, and soon within sight of the cloyster. No country-miss on her first appearance in publick, ever felt half the palpitations I did, on beholding the spot where my charming Sophia was immured.

I approached the place where she had given Jacques the letter, but what was my mortification to see the wall made up, and of course all communication with my angel debarred. I was ready to run mad at the disappointment, but Jacques in some measure relieved me, by saying he would engage the gardener in my interest, and that he perhaps would fix on some method of telling Sophia I was near.

I told Dick and Dalton (who were at some distance) of what Jacques had undertaken.—"Zooks man! (cried Dick) you will never come at her by them shilly shally roundabout ways!—let me set

fire to the house, and ecod we shall have the gates open in a moment, and that old grannum of a Mother Abbess, with all her nuns, running about, and squeaking like so many rabbits in a warren. Do you whip up Miss Sophy, and ecod I'll take old Madam, for I longs of all things to give her a ducking in England! And then I'll pit her against Nell, and see who'll scold most. O 'twill be rare sport!"

Not without much difficulty could we prevail upon Dick to give up this scheme, which he insisted was equally feasible and pleasant. But upon Dalton's hinting that there was such a punishment in France as breaking upon the wheel, and that he might possibly incur it, if caught with the Lady Abbess in his possession, he at length relinquished it.

We now returned to A——, my new acquaintance Jacques promising to bring me intelligence next morning of his success with the gardener; insisting at the same time that I should not stir 'till I saw him.

The morning came; but no Jacques 'till very late in the evening.—“I have been detained longer than I expected Sir, (said he) but I hope you will not be offended, when I tell you the cause.—The moment you quitted me I went to the gardener's lodge, and was told by his wife that he had gone to Orleans, to purchase some plants, and would not be home 'till night

I assure

I assure you, Sir, I was much disappointed, but there was no other remedy than patience. As soon as day dawned I went to find him, and took up some time, as you may suppose, to gain him to our purpose: at first he seemed afraid of losing his place, and muttered some scruples of betraying his employers: but I soon silenced him, by shewing the money I had received from you."——"Upon my faith, Jacques, (cried he) your arguments are unanswerable, and from this moment you may account me devoted to the service of my Lord Anglois.—But the mischief of it is, that I know not how to bring about the conveyance of any intelligence to the lady, for you know, 'twere as much as my life were worth, to be seen in the garden when the women are in it; and as to the leaving a letter in any place, that would be very unsafe; for the Superieure, or some of the nuns might as well get it, as her for whom it was intended."——"That's true Gerard, (said I) but we must lay our heads together, to hit upon something." And so we accordingly did; and the result of our conference was, that Gerard should conceal himself in the garden, instead of retiring when the ladies came to walk, and that we should watch for an opportunity to give Mademoiselle Sophie (whom he could easily distinguish by her English dress) your letter.—If you are pleased

with this scheme Monsieur, you have nothing more to do than to write the letter and I will carry it to Gerard."

"My dear Jacques (returned I) it pleases me so much, that I shall instantly do what you bid me. In the mean time take this," presenting him with five guineas, and ten more for your companion.

"Pardon me, Sir, (drawing back his hand) I have done nothing yet, and you have been already too generous: neither shall Gerard get any money till he has served you, for though I have a tolerable opinion of his honesty, I would not trust it too far."

"I think differently, Jacques, for I fancy nothing will make him execute the business with more alacrity than a taste beforehand of what he may expect after. And as to what concerns yourself, I ought not indeed to give you five guineas, but ten, which I this moment insist on your accepting, as you value my friendship."

Thus urged, the honest Jacques could no longer refuse, and I sat down to write my billet, which as near as I can recollect, contained these words.

"O beloved of my soul! I come to rescue thee from thy oppressors! Say, wilt thou

" thou commit thyself to my care?—wilt
 " thou accept my services? Heavens, what
 " transport, that I who live but for thee,
 " should be thy preserver!—My Sophia,
 " I am at A——, within twenty miles of
 " thy prison,—I will free thee from it, or
 " die! O life of my soul, I cannot exist
 " without thee!—come to the arms of thy
 " faithful lover; and that no vain scruples
 " may prevent thee from making me hap-
 " py, know that my uncle is dead, and
 " that I inherit his whole fortune, which
 " would prove a curse rather than a bles-
 " sing, did I not cherish a hope of thy
 " sharing it.

" Nay more—Woodville is discovered!
 " —the will he would have made the
 " world believe thy father's, is a forgery
 " of his own.—This indeed is not yet ful-
 " ly proved, but thy return to England
 " will destroy all his schemes.

" Come then my Sophia, to the man
 " who adores thee! I have a ladder of
 " ropes provided, and wait but thy assent
 " to apply them to the walls.

" Adieu my Sophia, words are too weak
 " to tell how much I love thee!

" EDWARD ——:"

I confided this billet to the trusty Jacques, who immediately departed. He came to me the day after, which was yesterday, but brought me no satisfactory intelligence. Gerard had hid himself, had seen Sophia, but was not able to give her the paper, as the Lady Abbess and a nun, never quitted her side, while they remained in the garden. To-day I hope he will have better luck ; yet I fear my *fortnight will be extended to a month.—At all events, George, if you should write to me, direct, A Monsieur, Monsieur Danville, Hotel de —, A—.

Commend me to my mother and Louisa, and forget not the rest of thy coterie.

Adieu,

MOR TIMER..

* See the beginning of the letter.

LETTER XXXI.

From Mr. VILLIERS, to Lord MORTIMER.

London.

YOU judg'd right, I was indeed offend-
ed—extremely offended—but of that
no more; you have cleared up the matter
to my satisfaction.

But dear Edward, I would have thee re-
collect that many things fall out between
the cup and the lip, and that happiness
may not be so near as you imagine. Con-
sider this I say, and let not thy imagina-
tion take the reins from thy reason, and
run away like an unruly horse from its ri-
der. All human affairs are liable to con-
tingencies, and pr'ythee call to mind, that
thou hast received no exclusive privilege
above the rest of mankind.

All the probabilities are against thee: I
will enumerate them:—It is probable that
Miss Nelson may never be at liberty to take
thy letter—if she does, it is probable she
may not be able to answer it—and it is
still more probable that thou will never
have it in thy power to carry her off.

All

All this I say, because I would have thee armed against the worst, and not go knocking thy head against the wall in case of a failure.

I know thou art a sorry philosopher, and that all my documents on that head, have done thee little good : but I will nevertheless go on to admonish thee not to put thy trust in sublunary things.

Example, it is said, is better than precept—but as I have received no great rubs in life, I cannot pretend to give thee that, yet I assure thee, were any thing to interrupt my present felicity, thou shouldst see me bear it like an Epictetus. I agree with him that all happiness depends on a right use of the appearances of things, and on the freedom of choice.—Great Heaven, Mortimer!—Louisa is ill—what will become of me. if—I cannot bear the thought—I shall run distracted!

* * * *

Thank Heaven!—'twas only a false alarm—and I am not miserable!—I cannot write any more, my heart is now as full of joy, as before of grief. Adieu.

GEORGE VILLIERS.

LETTER

L E T T E R XXXII.

From Lord MORTIMER to Mr. VILLIERS.

A—.

JACQUES returned to me a few moments after I had dispatched my letter to you.

“ Good news, my Lord!—Gerard has delivered your billet into Mademoiselle Sophie’s hands.”

“ What do you say, Jacques?—is it possible !”

“ It is indeed, my Lord, and I’ll tell you how. Your lordship judged right in saying the ten guineas would quicken Gerard’s desire to serve you. Yesterday evening he again conveyed himself to his hiding place, and had not been long there, when he saw Mademoiselle Sophie enter the garden, accompanied by an old four-faced nun. They walked towards the place of his concealment, and he felt some terrors of a premature discovery, when luckily the old nun ran suddenly to another part of the garden, to frighten some crows that were feasting on the grapes. Mademoiselle was going to follow, though not
so

so quick in her motions, when Gerard seizing the opportunity, called softly to bid her stop, and then bolting out of his retreat, threw the letter at her feet, and hastily concealed himself again.” — “Good God, (exclaimed she) what is this?” Then seeing the nun returning, hastily took it up and put it in her bosom. She then told this woman, whom she called sister Martha, that she found herself seized with a violent head-ach, and wished to retire to her chamber; the other assented to quitting the garden, and both went away. Gerard is to-day in the same place, and I make no doubt of bringing an answer to your billet to-morrow.”

Jacques was, however out in his prediction, for not till the fourth day after, did I get this welcome billet.

To Lord MORTIMER.

“ Hence all vain punctilios—I will speak
 “ the sentiments of my heart—Is it possible
 “ that you can entertain a doubt of my
 “ readiness to fly to you the moment I
 “ am able?—No, my Lord, I have no
 “ scruples against being yours for ever!—
 “ This is being tolerably explicit—but I
 “ have now no leisure for idle and fasti-
 “ dious”

“dious refinements.—Remain then at
 “A——, till I give you notice of the
 “proper moment to release me.—I am
 “afraid to venture for some days, but
 “be assured I will hasten my return to
 “England as much as possible, meantime
 “believe me your own.

“SOPHIA.”

I kissed the charming paper, I pressed it
 to my bosom, and uttered a thousand
 fond things which I dare say thy phyloso-
 phick head would take for downright non-
 sense.—So as I am pretty well satisfied with
 my own capacity, and wish not to hear it
 abused.—No more at present from.

MORTIMER.

LETTER

L E T T E R XXXIII.

From the SAME, to the SAME.

THY letter is just come to hand: as thou sayest, all happiness depends on a right use of the appearances of things and of the freedom of choice. I perfectly agree with thee and Epictetus. What was Louisa's illness to thee? is she not mortal, and consequently subject to such accidents? then why shouldst thou afflict thyself, for what does not depend upon thy choice. Ha! ha! ha! thou art a charming philosopher in theory, what a pity thou shouldst want the practical part! Be assured Villiers, I will keep thy letter, as a sort of talisman against probabilities: not forgetting to look at the latter part, where thy lesson is exemplified.

Now open thy eyes and read

To LORD MORTIMER.

"I am more at liberty than I was; therefore
 "day next at seven in the evening have
 "your ladder in readiness, and you will
 "then, if heaven pleases, behold

" SOPHIA.

† The one preceding the last.

George! Thursday will be to-morrow! imagine my transports, and be thankful for my condescension, in telling thee all this at a time when I am ready to run mad with joy.

And have I not reason? shall I not see Sophia? shall I not clasp her to my heart? but if thou shouldst not think these things sufficient to derange my understanding—I will put thee in mind that philosophers too can be distracted upon occasion.—

Adieu, I say nothing of my scheme till it succeeds.

MORTIMER.

LETTER.

LETTER XXXIV.

From the SAME, to the SAME.

EVERY moment, George, do I discover the truth of that observation of thine, which for fear it is not sufficiently imprinted on thy memory, I will repeat; videlicet, all human affairs are liable to contingencies, and as thou sayst, I have no exclusive privilege above the rest of mankind, not to meet with them: for which reason, I am become a convert to thy stoical doctrine so far as to consider, that it depends on my choice to be happy, though all the world were inclined to make me miserable: particularly as that same choice agrees with the appearances of things which to let thee into a secret are all in my favour.

Thy probabilities, are become improbabilities, now were I disposed to torment thee, I would go on ringing the changes on these words 'till thy stock of patience (which heaven knows is but small, notwithstanding thy pretensions to philosophy) was entirely exhausted, but I am merciful as great, and will spare thee for another opportunity,

opportunity, when the laughter-loving Craven, and my Sophia shall give it thee at both ears.

See! she takes the pen from my hand! Yes, she, my Sophia! Now dost thou stare like a country oaf, at the feast of a merry-andrew, but she shall speak for herself.

Miss NELSON writes.

Mr. Villiers, this friend of your's is really intolerable; he would have gone on, saying nothing to the purpose for hours, had not I interrupted him, see what it is to fancy one's self a wit!

As I feel myself inclined to plain matter of fact, I will, a round unvarnished tale deliver, of my escape from the convent, &c, &c.

I will begin my relation with telling you what happened after my answer to Lord Mortimer's first billet.

My spirits were so elated, by the prospect of a speedy deliverance, that I listened to Sister Martha's documents with unusual complacence; this change in my behaviour was productive of an immediate one in my situation: the attention I paid to her eloquence, flattered her vanity so much, that she began to regard me with great
seeming

seeming kindness, and as much good humour as her features would allow.

In short, she made me her confidant, which I suppose was occasioned, by her fear of trusting any one else on the subject of her grievances.

She was giving me a detail of these, two days after I had dispatched my billet, when she was rather disagreeably interrupted by the entrance of the Superieure, she had been railing with particular virulence against that lady, for her tyranny over all the sisters, and principally herself, who she averred, had the best right to that place the other held, and had certainly been elected as the eldest nun in the convent, but for the cabals of her rival.—She had scarcely ended, and not unheard, when the Abbess burst into the room, as I said before, and reproached her with the utmost acrimony for her pride, and ingratitude.

Martha, finding denial vain, retorted the charge, and even added those of hypocrisy and circumvention. The dispute now grew so loud, that all the nuns were about us in an instant, and the Superieure, gaining new courage from the arrival of her adherents, ordered Martha to retire to her cell immediately: which she absolutely refused, and disclaimed her authority to confine her. Numbers however forcing her to yield, she was carried off to
her

her cell, where the Superieure declared she should be fed with bread and water, 'till a sincere repentance entitled her to better usage.

I thought this too good an opportunity, of speaking in my dear Hortensia's favour, to be missed. "I am sorry Madam, (said I, addressing the Superieure,) that you were not sooner made acquainted with Sister Martha's temper; your goodness would not then have been abused by her misrepresentations of one who entertained a high and just respect for you. I mean Sister Agatha."

"You are right, (said the Abbess,) softened by the compliment—You are right, my dear child, the easiness of my nature would not suffer me to suspect, that one who possessed my confidence would so grossly abuse it, but it is not yet too late to retract what I have done, Sister Agatha, shall be restored to liberty and my favour: it is the least I can do for the poor thing, after what she has undergone. I will send her to you immediately, for I know you love one another."

"Heaven bless you, dear Madam, for this goodness. I do indeed entertain a strong affection for Sister Agatha, it was she who gave me a just opinion of your merit, of the happiness which the community enjoyed under your gentle domination, and who brought me to support confinement

finement with any degree of patience, when the cross Sister Martha undid all my friend's work by her severity.

"Say no more, my dear child; she shall never do so again, and your friend shall perfect her labours."

She went out, and in half an hour I was joined by my friend—my joy was extreme, nor was hers more moderate. As soon as I found we were secure from listeners, I shewed her my Edwards letter, and told her how I came by it.

"Alas! then I am going to lose you! (cried she in a sorrowful tone,) pardon me, dear Sophia; though I wish your happiness, I cannot bear you should possess it, by parting with me."

"My dear, my charming friend! (cried I, embracing her, we will share one fate!"

"If the Almighty pleases to deliver us, you shall come with me to England, and we will seek for your Claude."

"You will take me with you!" heaven ever bless you!" cried she bursting into tears: how often does joy, wear the face of grief!

I spent the rest of the day, with the Superieure, who treated me very kindly, and I in return was not deficient in attention to her. While we were at breakfast in the refectory next day, Sister Agatha whispered her. "A very little time Madam, and this sweet girl will be all I wish." The

Superieure

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Superieure replied only by a look and a nod of complacence.

Some time after, in our usual promenade, I got another billet from your friend, to tell me the scheme he had formed for my escape, and to entreat I would hasten its execution. Many days passed before I was able to send him the answer you have seen; and the destined evening, as the nuns were going to prayers, I complained of a great faintness, and begged the Superieure to excuse my friend from this duty, and permit her to go with me into the garden. As she was entirely unsuspicious, and wished to conciliate my affections by a compliance with every reasonable request, she immediately assented, and with palpitating hearts, Sister Agatha and I hastened to the place of rendezvous.

Imagine us now at the wall.—The signal my Edward had, was to tie a stone in a handkerchief, and fling it over; I delayed not to do this, though trembling excessively from mingled hope and fear.

But I had occasion for all my resolution when your friend appeared, followed by Dick Woodville—"My Lord!" "Dear Sophia!" was all we could articulate, but he started back on seeing Sister Agatha, whom he had not perceived at first.

"She goes with us, (said I scarce able to speak, this was enough, he bade Dick take charge of her, and catching me in his arms,

arms, we were in a moment at the other side of the wall, where we found Mr. Dalton; sister Agatha and Dick joined us immediately, and we all proceeded in the most profound silence to an opening in the forest, where my dear Edward had provided a chaise.—He put my friend and me in, and then getting on horseback with his companions, (one of whom was the faithful Jacques) we drove on with such speed, as to take away all the little sense the hurry of the preceding scene had left me.

Sister Agatha was the first who recovered herself, and she immediately set about taking off her religious dress, and putting on a profane one of mine, which with some more necessaries, we had had the precaution to conceal about us.

She completed her metamorphose before we reached Orleans, and when Lord Mortimer came to hand us out, he betrayed some astonishment at the sudden change, but instantly conjecturing the cause, he led us into an apartment where—but I pass over the scene that followed—for who would presume to speak of these silly things to a philosopher of the stoical sect too.

“Cato’s a pretty person to entrust
“A love tale with.”——

You ready to

Your friend, however, was not so entirely engrossed by this same subject, as to forget there was any other person present than your humble servant.—I will not indeed, deviate so far from truth, as to pretend he had the absolute use of his faculties for some time; but when he did recover them, he seemed much struck with the appearance of Hortensia, no longer sister Agatha.

Never did I see her look so beautiful—joy had given such an agreeable tinge of red to her cheeks, and such a brilliancy to her eyes, that she seemed something more than human.—I assure you, at that moment, I felt my own littleness extremely.

I introduced these two persons so dear to me, to each other, and they had scarce time to make their mutual compliments, when Dick entered and exclaimed, (taking my hand and giving it a hearty shake) "Ecod, Miss Sophy, I am glad to see you, moreover I know it will vex Nell's heart, that she can't plague you any more; and old squaretoes will be ready to eat his nails:—But who is that tight piece there? (addressed he whispering) ecod I likes her very well?—but sure she can't be the black thing I took over the wall?"—"The very same indeed," answered I. "Then I'm sorry for it (cried he) for all she's so pretty:—you must know I wouldn't be so ready to take her down, only I thought it

was old grannum Abbess that you inveigled o'purpose;—and ecod, I was minded several times to let her drop as if I could'nt help it, but then I thought again that I'd have more fun a ducking her well when I got home."

He would have talked of his disappointment half an hour longer, had not Dalton hastily entered, and told us that every thing was ready for departure, and that he had sent Dick to tell us so.

In short, my dear Sir, we are now safe from pursuit, and as happy as any thing in this sublunary world can be : at least I think I can answer for your friend, and I am sure I can for myself :—As for Hortensia, she cannot be wholly so, 'till reunited to her Claude.

Tell my dearest Maria that I am impatient to embrace her—assure Mrs. Stanhope that I feel for her, all the respect, love and veneration due to the mother of Lord Mortimer, and that I hope soon to convince her, you, and your Louisa, of the very sincere esteem I bear you all.—Adieu my dear Sir,

SOPHIA NELSON

LETTE

L E T T E R XXXV.

From LADY MORDEN, *to* Miss CRAVEN.

Portman Square.

HASTEN my Lucy to join the happiest society on earth; your good parents will, I am sure, give you to our united requests: come then, dear girl, your presence is the only addition we want to our pleasures.—Sophia, Mortimer, Hortensia, all—all are with us, they arrived on Wednesday night.

At the sound of the welcome carriage, I could scarce prevent myself from fainting. Lord Morden supported me while Villiers and Doctor Wentworth flew down stairs.—In a few minutes I heard the voice of my Sophia, I flew out of the drawing room and clasped her in my arms.—We had every body about us in a moment, and congratulations without number were heard from all. We then entered the drawing-room, and beheld Lord Mortimer at the feet of his venerable mother, who regarded him with ineffable delight.

Description can give no idea of the scene that followed; let it suffice to tell you,

that Mrs. Stanhope received Sophia as she deserved, and the dear girl has already gained so much upon her, that I fancy she begins to rival Lord Mortimer in her affections.

A new scene of congratulations ensued, on Sophia's introducing Hortensia, who returned the compliments that were paid her with inimitable grace. She is, except Sophia, (and I know not in strict justice, whether I should even make that exception) the loveliest creature I have ever seen.—You see Lucy, I put not you in competition with her; but really since I entertain a doubt about Sophia, you may be content.

Dick Woodville was no secondary personage in our happy society, but he soon left us, eager, as he said, to carry the news to old Squaretoes and Nell, as he knew 'twould make them ready to hang themselves.

Next morning while we were at breakfast, he entered the room whistling, and without saluting any person, took his seat in the window. I asked if he had breakfasted: instead of giving any answer, he twinkled his hat about on his finger for a few minutes, and then (still continuing his tune) threw it with the utmost violence at the breakfast-table, where it instantly mingled tea, chocolate, cream, &c. &c. in the most ruinous confusion. This action seemed

ed to bring him to himself; he begged pardon in a tone of confusion, and it was soon granted; but we all entreated to know what had thus disturbed him.

"I tell you what, (said he) father has turned me out, and I don't know where to go—that's all."

"Not know where to go, and I here?" cried Lord Mortimer, impetuously. Dick understood him. "Ecod (said he) I forgot that, for father kept such a wrangling and jangling, that my head was addled with his nonsense."

"Pr'ythee, Dick, tell us how it was?" said Villiers.

"That I will directly:—Why you know I went home last night, and there I found the whole squad in the parlour. The minute I put my nose inside the door;—" So, (says father, looking plaguy glum) pray where have you been?"—"In France," says I. "In France!" cries Squaretoes. "In France, (cries Nell) sure the boy is dreaming!"—"Ecod then you'll be damnablely vexed when I wake," says I, sitting down.—"And pray Sir, (cries father) what carried you to France?"—"I went with my friend Lord Mortimer, (says I, looking very big) and I helped him to run away with my cousin Sophy from the convent."—"You went with Lord Mortimer? you helped him to run away with your cousin! what does the whelp mean?"—says Nell.

“ Ecod I think I speak plain enough, (says I) but may-hap you may have a cold ;” so I went up to her, and putting my mouth close to her ear, while I held her fast, bawled out as loud as I was able—“ I tell you Lord Mortimer and I brought your cousin from France ! how do you like the news ?” So I let her go, and she gave me a confounded box, and only that mother and Cass came between, ecod we’d have had hot work ; for I wasn’t one that much liked douces o’the chops.—Then Nell opened upon me, and made such a noise, that I was forced to stop my ears. So when she found all she said didn’t signify, as I couldn’t hear her, mere vexation made her blubber as if she was at a funeral. As to father, he looked like a stuck pig all the time ; at last he came back to his tantrums, and taking up his cane—“ Sirrah, (says he) you have undone me !” and was going to hit me a great blow, when mother caught hold of his hand crying, “ Fie, lovey, would you kill my poor boy ?”—“ Damn your poor boy and you too ! (cries father, gnashing his teeth) he could not as he has done, cause the ruin of his whole family, but for your foolish indulgence !” Mother sneaked back to her chair directly, and I leaving ’em to squabble together, ran away to my own room, locked the door, and went to bed, for I was plaguy tired.—Well, in the morning, down I came again

to eat my breakfast ; but no breakfast did I see, they were all at sixes and sevens ;— father walking about the room beating his head ; Nell and her husband in the window, as sulky as the devil ; poor mother crying in a corner, and Cass sitting by, looking very stately. The moment father saw me, he cried, “ Out of my house unnatural villain !—and never set foot in it again ! ” — “ Give me something to eat first, (said I) and ecod I’ll go fast enough, but I won’t stir a step without my breakfast. ” — “ You won’t, sirrah, ” said he running for his cane ; but ecod I’d no stomach for blows in a morning ; out I scampered, and left him to cool his courage against the chairs ; so here I am, and that’s all I’ve to tell. ”

Dick, who I believe imagined he had delivered this relation in a very pathetick manner, seemed rather surprised at the mirth that ensued, but an assurance from Lord Mortimer and Sophia, that they would make no peace with Woodville, in which he was not included, restored him to perfect ease and satisfaction.

Woodville has flown, but we know not where, nor indeed are either of the injured parties solicitous to discover. L.— keeps out of the way, and the matter yet seems suspended : in the mean time, we are all eager to have Mortimer and Sophia immediately united. But she is a little perverse, and declares nothing shall be concluded ’till

you come.—You see, my dear, the absolute necessity of hastening your arrival. Chapman must accompany you. When all is settled here, we will return with you to Belmont, spend a few days there, and then run away with your family and whatever stragglers we can pick up, to Mortimer Park.

* * * *

Rejoice with us dear Lucy! I have just learned that one of the other witnesses to the will has been gained over, and has deposited among other things, that there is at present in Mr. L——'s house some plate, which belonged to Mr. Nelson, and which he received from Woodville as some part of a bribe to betray his trust.

The Lord Chief Justice's warrant will be immediately obtained to search the house, and then all comes to light; they are about it this moment, but I must conclude now, as we have company to dinner, and I have not yet thought of my toilet.—Adieu my dear, hasten to your affectionate

MARIA MORDEN.

LET.

L E T T E R XXXVI.

From Miss CRAVEN, to Mrs. CRAVEN.

Portman Square.

WELL Madam, the warrant has been obtained, the house searched, the original will found.—Woodville, is—I know not where, so is L—, nor does this circumstance give Sophia much displeasure

But really here am I brought into a scrape; this very morning was I trying with all my eloquence to make Sophia sensible of her folly, in refusing to be married immediately. “If my friend is able to withstand these arguments, (said Lady Morden) I give her up; but my dear, example is better than precept; and I dare say you are too much interested for Lord Mortimer, not to make use of every method in your power to insure him success.”

“Pardon me Lady Morden,—

“I cannot find it in the bond.”

“Self-interest is a pretty thing enough; and I cannot find in my heart to advance

Lord Mortimer's affairs at my own expence.— So mes cheres Dames, I leave you to canvass that matter at your leisure," added I, flying out of the room.

I was stopped on the stairs by Mortimer, Chapman, and Villiers.— "Whither so fast my fair one?" cried the former, catching my gown. "Ah for Heaven's sake (cried I) let me go! Lady Morden has taken away my breath, and I am running up stairs for a little *sal volatile*."

"Come, come, (resumed the teizing wretch) there is something more meant in this than meets the ear.—You shall positively return to the drawing-room, where we will judge of your grievances, and apply a proper remedy."

Sensible that three male creatures were more than I could resist, I made a virtue of necessity, and went back quietly. Chapman whispered as we went in "My charming Lucy, shall I guess the cause of this perturbation?" "Ah no, (cried I) do not puzzle your head about it; your faculties are in general a little out of order, and I would not be the cause of deranging them still more."

I was saluted by a general laugh at my entrance.— "I am happy to find Lucy (said Lady Morden, maliciously) that Mr. Chapman has had influence enough to induce you to hear reason."

"O my

“ O my dear, (said I) you may judge of the state of his influence by his appearance.” This was turning the tables on ’em, for you never saw any thing look so silly and out of the way, as Chapman did at that moment. His confusion inspired me with new courage, and Dalton just then coming in (who would be really a pretty enough fellow, but for his Don Dismallo countenance) I took it into my head to badinage a little with him; and succeeded so well, as to deprive Chapman of all patience, who shortly, with a very ferocious air, snatched up his hat and quitted the room. Villiers followed, and I know not the result of their conference, as I came up stairs immediately, willing to spare my sagacious friends the trouble of making those animadversions on my conduct, which they in their wisdom might think necessary. I must leave you now to dress. Some company dine here, among the rest Lord Warham, and Lady Anne H—: In the evening we go to Drury Lane theatre.

* * * * *

Three in the morning.

I am in such agitation that I cannot think of sleep; but I assure you anger alone is the cause.

No sooner had I compleated the important business of attiring my sweet person, than I went to the drawing room in high good humour, and with a determination, (silly that I was) to make up my quarrel with Chapman. He was sitting near Hortensia when I went in, and to my condescending nod, returned not a civil bow; but pursued his conversation, and affected to be sweet upon his companion.

As I knew he had no chance there, this subterfuge excited my raillery, and he was beginning to look extremely small, when the company arrived. Lady Anne H— no sooner appeared, than he flew to her with the greatest expression of joy you can conceive; and was so ridiculously assiduous about her, that she was scarce able to speak to any one else.

Though this was provoking enough, I imagined he could not long hold out, and accordingly expected, that when we went to dinner, he would contrive to seat himself near me as usual. But no such thing happened I assure you, he placed himself next Lady Anne, and seemed quite happy in his new situation. Villiers nodded at me
with

with a provoking air, as much as to say, "You see he can console himself." I answered with a smile of contempt, and a toss of my head; but nevertheless was most truly provoked. There was however no remedy. I could not foil him at his own weapons, as I had nobody near enough to speak to, but Doctor Wentworth and Lord Warham, and they had fallen into discourse on politicks, in which I had neither abilities or inclination to share.

Two whole hours after the cloth was removed, did I remain in this uncomfortable state; Lady Morden (I am convinced) staying longer than usual, on purpose to torment me. We retired at last, but not 'till my patience was thoroughly exhausted.—Hortensia, (for Lady Morden, Sophia, and Louisa kept aloof) Hortensia I say, with much good nature, tried to raise my spirits, but in vain, till an impertinent speech from Lady Anne; (who you know does not pique herself on an over and abundant stock of politeness) effectually aroused them.

"My dear Miss Craven, (said she) only imagine what a ridiculous report there is in the beau monde.—They say you are shortly to be married to Mr. Chapman, and certainly these sort of things do one an injury when without foundation. You may depend on me to contradict it, as I am well assured Mr. Chapman would never appear so indifferent to you, were such an event likely

likely to happen." "Your Ladyship is very good, but I am not willing to lead you into an error. As what the world says is in part true, your Ladyship's zeal may be represented to proceed from a less amiable motive than good nature.—Mr. Chapman is certainly my professed slave, and what you mistook for indifference, was only a foolish effort of resentment. His attention to you, arose solely from a desire to make me uneasy, but the silly creature is mistaken in the means. Your Ladyship is the last person in the world whom I should be jealous of." My reply mortified her vanity, but after a little recollection—"Your opinion of me, my dear, (said she) is very just, I never could find pleasure in making any body uneasy, much less a friend like you. I assure you that all the influence I possess over Mr. Chapman, shall be employed in making him return to you."

"Alas! if that is all I have to depend on, I fear indeed for his constancy."

Our conversation was now interrupted by his entrance, and coffee being brought in immediately after, I quitted my post by her Ladyship, and went to Sophia, who rallied me most unmercifully on what had passed.

It was soon time to go to the play, and Lady Anne giving her hand to Chapman, with a look of triumph at me, quitted the room. The rest of the party followed, and

and as we went down stairs, I had a mind to know whether my swain's indifference was real or affected; accordingly making a false step, I screamed out that I had sprained my ankle.

The gentleman flew to me with an appearance of infinite solicitude. "My Lucy are you hurt? return back to the drawing-room I beseech you;—lean on my arm,"—and he was actually taking my hand for that purpose, but I drew it back with an air of great hauteur:—"Pardon me, Sir, I will not deprive Lady Anne, of her Cicisbeo."

"O my Lucy! did you know"——

"Your Lucy—insolent!—I desire to know nothing of your affairs.—Leave me Sir, I am perfectly safe; return to those who are pleased with your society—I am not anxious to obtain it."

He bit his lips—"You shall be obeyed Madam.—I will not torment you." And he joined Lady Anne. I contrived to be in the same carriage with them, and when we reached the theatre, had prepared another rebuff again he came to hand me out; but I might have spared myself the trouble, for he never offered that service.

In the play-house—my dear Madam, I will never forgive him! it is impossible! All the audience were witnesses of his neglect of me, and attention to Lady Anne!—such whisperings, such ogings, such affected

fectured laughs that I was deprived of all patience, and looked about eagerly for somebody to pit against him, as Dick says.

Fortunately Colonel C—— that moment caught my eye, and made a low bow:— a nod, and an encouraging smile from your humble servant, soon brought him to our box, and I thought Chapman began to shrink, from the consciousness of his own inferiority. I now promised myself a pretty scene of flirtation, when death to my hopes! the dear man's attention was wholly engrossed by Hortensia!

"Heavens! what a lovely creature! (whispered he pretty audibly) speak dear Miss Craven, who is she? Hortensia's knowledge of English, was sufficient to make her blush at this exclamation.

On a repetition of his question I told him she was a native of France, and had just eloped from a convent. "O delightful (cried he) I beg you will introduce me." "Believe me, (returned I) your attentions will be thrown away, her heart is not at all of the inflammable kind."—"O no matter, in love or war, one repulse should not be regarded."—"I fear you will meet with more than one; but since you are wilfully blind to your danger, I will introduce you."— This matter settled, he attached himself to Hortensia for the remainder of the night, and poor I was again left forlorn; not that there was a deficiency of
men

men in our box, but my last attempt had proved so unsuccessful, that I would not venture another; so I had nothing to do but fix my eyes on the stage, to regard a very uninteresting sen-ti-men-tal performance.

Much to my relief, we at length quitted the house, and the former scene between Lady Anne and Chapman was repeated at supper. 'Tis true I ventured now and then to throw out some inuendos against them, with which, only the strangers of our party seemed entertained: all my quondam friends thinking it incumbent on them to look cross and grave.

Thank my stars, however, though provoked beyond bearing, I was able to sit out the company, and then without deigning to speak to any one else, quitted the room with a stately air. Adieu Madam, as Jackson's mistress says in Roderick Random.—“Morfus begins to shed his illustrious puppies.” Sleeping and waking I am yours affectionately.

L. C.

L E T-

L E T T E R XXXVII.

From the SAME, to the SAME.

I KNEW Chapman could not hold it out; next morning he was in his penitentials, and I, with never enough to be applauded goodness accorded to his pardon.

I arose early, and went to the breakfast parlour. He was there, I started back on seeing him, and made a motion to the door. "Stop, Madam, (said he, seizing my gown) stop, if you would not have me run distracted."

"You forget Sir, to whom you are speaking.—I presume you mistake me for Lady Anne H——." "Talk not of a creature whom I despise!"—"You despise, very pretty—you, who no later than last night, were sighing, dying, languishing for her."

"Oh my Lucy, forgive the fraud of love!—you know not what my dissimulation cost me: it was Villiers who inspired me with the nonsensical design of making you jealous. I fear I have offended beyond a hope of forgiveness:—there is no humiliation I would not endure to obtain your
pardon

pardon. Speak, O say you do not utterly detest me!"

"Why no, not absolutely, (said I smiling) here's my hand I forgive you, were it only to vex Villiers for his impertinent interference.—He shall not have it in his power to plume himself on bringing about our reconciliation. I will shew them all that I can act well when I like."

It is not necessary to repeat the remainder of our conversation: we were in a mighty soft, silly, tender sort of way when joined by the rest of the family, and I have behaved so properly (according to your ideas) ever since, that you would scarce know me for your daughter. To say the truth, I have been a thousand times on the point of resuming my former character, and as often deterred, in pity to your future son-in-law; for such he shall be, one time or other, though I know not when.

See what it is to be too indulgent, he taps at my door, and insists on my going down stairs.—For once I comply. Adieu dear Madam.

LUCINDA CRAVEN.

LET-

LETTER XXXVIII.

*From the Marquis DE LISSON, to Lord
MORTIMER.*

Chateau De Liffon,

I HAVE received your letter, my friend, and rejoice at your good fortune. Such spirit, and such love as yours must conquer all obstacles. Receive our thanks for your generous protection of Mademoiselle De Aulay; our Hortensia, let me call her,—for soon I hope, will she be ours.—We shall be all happy! My Jacqueline has found her brother! he is now under this roof!

One evening about a week ago, I was told a gentleman wished to see me. I ordered him to be admitted, and a stranger of a genteel appearance entered.

“My Lord, (cried he advancing,) I have not the honour to be personally known to you, but you are acquainted with my name—it is Beaumont.” “Good heaven!—the friend of my unfortunate brother,” exclaimed I, starting and catching his hand. “The same indeed,” returned he.

“Oh!

" Oh ! tell me, (said I impatiently,) does Claude yet exist ? and may I rejoice the heart of his sister with the tidings ?"

" He does, and is even this moment within a trifling distance of the Chateau "

" O where ? let me fly !" " We will both go, my Lord—but would it not be proper to apprize the Marchioness of his arrival ?"

My Jacqueline was instantly called, and I introduced Lord Beaumont, and then while her surprize was yet high, told her what I knew of Claude. She burst into tears, ejaculated her thanks to heaven, and bade us haste to bring her brother.

My new acquaintance had a chaise in waiting, which soon conveyed us to a cottage, half a league distant from the Chateau. Near the fire place stood a young man in a musing posture, with his back towards us : he turned not 'till Lord Beaumont exclaimed " My dear Claude, behold the husband of your sister !" He advanced, and I was in his arms instantly. I prepared to see something extraordinary, my expectations were even surpassed : figure to yourself the counterpart of my Jacqueline, adorned with every manly grace, and judge how I was struck by his appearance.

I spoke to him of his sister's anxiety to see him, and begged he would hasten with us to the Chateau.

" To

"To the Chateau? (repeated he indignantly,) does not the Comte De St. Pierre reside there?" "Your father, my dear Claude."—"My father!—no, my destroyer!" cried he, striking his breast.

"You shall not see him without you desire the interview. He is confined to his chamber by indisposition; he is very ill indeed. But no more of him, your Jacqueline is impatient to embrace you."

"My father ill? (said he in a softened tone,) yes, my Lord, added he, with greater vivacity, yes, I will go with you, I will hasten to my sister!"

We returned immediately, and met Du Bois in the hall. "Good God! (cried he starting) do I see my dear young master?" he fell at his feet and embraced his knees. Claude raised him tenderly; torrents of joyful tears streamed down the old man's cheeks. "Heaven be praised! (cried he sobbing;) "My prayers are answered;—you are come to make us all happy, and you will be so yourself."

"Never!—never!" exclaimed Claude, vehemently, "Say not so my dear child; your sister loves you and all will be well." "True, my sister! (cried he eagerly,) where is she? where is my Jacqueline?" "My dear brother!" said she, rushing into his arms. They sunk gently on the floor, Beaumont, and I raised and supported

ported them to a parlour, and seated them together on a sofa.

After the first burst of delight was over, "Claude! (said, my Jacqueline, looking earnestly at him,) you are greatly altered."

"Grief!—my sister,—grief and despair!"—

"Well then, (returned she, smiling through her tears) we will try what joy can do."

"Joy! Oh God! (cried he rising, and putting his hand to his breast with a look of anguish) Joy did you say?—my Hortensia! my soul, can I know joy, and thou in the cold grave?"

"My brother—I have heard strange tidings of Hortensia. I have heard a doubt of what we thought so certain—her death!"

"Ha! do not trifle with my despair, Jacqueline; you mean well, but such tenderness is cruelty."

"It is true, my brother, such tenderness would indeed be cruelty; suspect not your Jacqueline."—"Oh speak then! say but—Oh heaven, that letter—I could not be deceived!"—"Dearest Claude, hope every thing," "Distract me not my sister: does she live?" "She lives, and lives for you!"

"Oh God! she lives" cried he, and fell senseless on the floor. "I have killed him! I have murdered my brother!" cried Jacqueline, flinging herself beside him. It was a scene of the utmost distress! We applied the proper remedies, but so long

without any effect, that I feared he was gone for ever ; my wife was in a state bordering on distraction.

At length he opened his eyes. "My Jacqueline, (said he) why do you weep?"

"Be composed my brother, and I will weep no longer." "My sister——do I dream, or said you that Hortensia lived?"

"It is most true," said I. He threw himself on his knees, and continued some time in that posture, his hands and eyes raised to heaven, then arose, a serene joy beaming on his countenance.

Our good Pere Maurice now entered, and a new scene of pleasure and of tears ensued. As soon as we were all tolerably composed, Jacqueline, drew Claude aside, and while she related to him Hortensia's deliverance, Beaumont informed me how he had prevailed upon him to revisit France. I will give you the narration in his own words.

Lord BEAUMONT speaks.

"When Claude quitted that retreat, where Miss Nelson saw him, he came immediately to me ; he found me much better than he expected, and I shortly recovered my usual health and strength. I then proposed a scheme, to which he reluctantly assented. It was to take a private tour through

through Italy, which I had long wished to revisit.

We went by sea, and had a favourable passage to Leghorn. In compliance with my friend's desire, I concealed my title, and we passed for idle gentlemen of small fortune, which rendered our society little sought. At length we reached Turin, where we had no sooner arrived than the master of the hotel we stopped at, gave us a detail of an affair that had made much noise in that city. This was the death of your brother-in-law, Albert De St Pierre. He told the story at first without mentioning the names of the parties, and said that what rendered this event peculiarly fatal, was that but one male descendant of this family, (one of the most eminent in France) remained alive, and was apprehended to be at present in a deep decline: it must be a dreadful thing to a father, added he, to see all his posterity thus cut off in the prime of life; and I feel much pity for the unfortunate Comte De St Pierre!

"St Pierre! (exclaimed Claude, with a look of horror,) What was it Albert De St Pierre, who was killed?" The master of the hotel, answered in the affirmative. "Oh Albert! my brother!" exclaimed Claude, melting into tears. The host began to make apologies, but I hastily interrupted him: "Leave us for a while, (said I, his grief must be indulged?)"

When we were alone I spoke not 'till the violence of his emotions had subsided; and then addressed him in these words,

"My dear Claude, though this event is undoubtedly melancholy, yet it gives us new cause to admire the justice of providence: heaven has at length thought proper to punish your father, for his vain and unnatural pride; he must now, spite of himself, look forward to you, as the only remaining stay of his family. Come then, dear friend, let us haste to seize the favourable opportunity; we will go to France, you shall present yourself before the Compté, and nature will work powerfully for you."

"What, me! (cried he indignantly) me present myself before the destroyer of Hortensia! no, I would fly to the utmost extremity of the earth, were there no other method left me, to avoid his sight. He could spurn me when I knelt at his feet, who could add insult to cruelty, and tauntingly tell me, I had no longer a Madame Des Estampes to shield me from his barbarity! The murderer of my benefactors—of my love—say, can I behold him with any other sensation than horror? And you vainly suppose the obduracy of his spirit, will give place to the tender feelings of natural affection! You know him not, I do!"

Finding

Finding him so determined, I desisted, and soon after bethought me of an innocent artifice, which I immediately put in practice; one day the host came in, (as I had preconcerted) and related to us a story, which he said he had learned from one of the French Envoy's attendants, who had heard it from his master. This was an account of a terrible accident which befell a lady, at a hunting match in France, where the king and all the court were present. The boar they were hunting, turned on her horse and gored him with his tusks, and the lady unable to keep her seat fell off. Many cavalliers immediately gathered round, but not soon enough to prevent her from being considerably hurt, and the flight had thrown her into so dangerous a fever that her life was now almost despaired of. I asked her name, he replied, "the Marchioness De Liffon, and that she had been carried to her Chateau.

"Great heaven, Beaumont! my sister! let us be gone this moment!" "Stay, dear Claude (cried I, fearful of testifying too much impatience for the journey) there may be some mistake." "O no sir (cried the host) the person from whom I had the intelligence, was positive it was her." "Why do we delay?" cried Claude (impatiently) and rushing out gave orders for our instant departure.

We left Turin that day, and he complained incessantly of the slow pace of the horses, though their motion was remarkably quick. In fine, my Lord, after many days travelling, we came to the cottage where I carried you. There I unfolded my scheme, and his joy was so great at the hearing of the Marchioness's safety, that he almost forgave me the deception I had practised: but as the peasants told us that the Compte resided at the Chateau, he refused to enter it, and I came to you."

Thus ended the generous Beaumont, and I returned him all the acknowledgements so justly due to the protector and restorer of our Claude.

Jacqueline now described her father's ill health in the most moving terms, and her brother gave a tear to the relation. I am interrupted.

* * * * *

The Chevalier is no more! and the intelligence has been broken to the Compte as gently as possible, by my Jacqueline, but he was so greatly shocked, that in a few hours, the physicians pronounced him in eminent danger. He at length became sensible of this truth himself, and calling my wife to his bed side, "Jacqueline, (said he) a little time, and you will have no father! I feel my strength hourly exhausting,
and

and I have a long account to make with my God. I would see Pere Maurice."

The good man remained alone with him for the space of an hour, and at the end of that time he sent for the Marchioness again. "My daughter (cried he) I am brought to a just sense of my offences. I shall die unpitied, and unlamented, by all but thee! and with reason; an inordinate pride had silenced within me all the feelings of nature and humanity, and providence has punished me justly by the loss of two sons for my cruelty to him whom I deserted; I would willingly make this unfortunate youth all the atonement in my power, but alas! he must long since have fallen a victim to my barbarity. You only remain, my daughter, alas, you only of all my children! Had I cherished the blessings bestowed upon me—but it is too late. Shall repentance suffice, Oh God? shall these bitter and scalding tears I shed, find acceptance with thee? O my children! would I could die, that ye might live!

Here Maurice now made a signal to my wife to retire. She obeyed and joined us. A repetition of her father's words affected us all, but Claude most sensibly: he turned away—he struggled with the rising passion, looked at Jacqueline, and burst into tears. In some time Du Bois hastily entered.

M 4

"My

"My dear master, cried he, running to Claude, and seizing his hand, come to your father instantly! he desires your presence with impatience." He arose. "My father (cried he) my father desire my presence, impossible!" "It is true, nevertheless," (said Dubois) hurrying him away. We followed in silence.

"Is it you my son?" (cried the Compte, as the door opened.) "Yes, my father, (cried Claude, springing to the bed side) Yes, my father, if you will own me for your son." "Oh heaven! (cried the Compte) this goodness from one I have injured. My son, my son! canst thou indeed pardon me?"

"This language is too humiliating for my father," returned Claude, throwing himself on the bed and embracing him. The Compte strained him in his arms: then suddenly flinging him off, and staring wildly. "You are come to upbraid your father! (cried he) what shall I be controuled? Shall I know any other law than my own will?"—He then took a listening attitude. "Say my prayers—aye, so I will. Cruel! wilt thou not suffer thy father to supplicate forgiveness?" I did not kill Madam Des Estampes—it is false! What, the daughter of a Bourgeoise? mean boy—my Jacqueline, come to thy father—Oh horror! it is Hortensia! see the dagger—Oh for mercy do not strike! I am
unprepared!

unprepared!" He then sunk down overpowered by the violence of his delirium: but soon recovering his senses, "You weep my son (cried he to Claude) alas, it is I who ought to weep—to weep tears of blood! oh my son! my son!"—The scene now grew too tender, we separated them, and Claude has since then, been most constant in attendance on his father.

See, my lord, what a happy turn things have taken. What thanks do we not owe to the all-wise disposer of events. Claude writes to his Hortensia,* but 'till the Compté's fate is decided, cannot quit him. Adieu, accept the best wishes of

Lyssoy.

• This letter does not appear.

L E T T E R XXXVIII.

From Miss CRAVEN to Mrs. CRAVEN.

Portman Square.

WOODVILLE has written his neice, a long farrago of nonsense, setting forth his good intentions in detaining her fortune, &c. &c. But declares (such is his indignation against Dick,) that he is glad things have taken another turn. The forgery he entirely imputes to the superabundance of his care for her welfare, which he was fearful would be injured by a knowledge of every thing being in her own power.

I am affraid the old wretch ought to be hanged——somebody taps at my door.

* * * *

It was Sophia. She is certainly the most extraordinary girl in the world. Do you know what she came to consult me upon? Woodville lived at so high an expence upon the strength of expectation, that his affairs are much embarrassed, and a sequestration of his trifling estate for the payment of

of debts, is in agitation. Sophia having heard this, is determined to prevent it, and came just now to consult me about that, and writing a consolatory epistle to Mrs. Woodville.

"You are right, (cried I laughing,) and pray do not forget the amiable Mrs. O'Flaherty, in your kind condolence." "You may laugh Lucy, but poor Mrs. Woodville is not answerable for the misconduct of her husband; and I should be highly to blame were I to confound the innocent with the guilty; but since I see you disposed to rally my intentions, I will not discover them all." So saying, the provoking creature left me on the tenter-hooks of curiosity.—You undoubtedly expect I should say something of Hortensia.—Why my dear Madam, since the receipt of her lover's letter she treads in air, and is more beautiful than you can conceive.

After all, joy is a better cosmetic than the Sircassian wash, nothing gives more clearness to the complexion or more brilliancy to the eyes. Poets may talk as they please of beauty in tears; red nose and eye-lids are mighty pretty to be sure, but I am much mistaken if those seeming admirers of Miss Melpomene, do not in the r hear.s prefer the smiles of the merry Thalia, to all the doleful graces of her buskin'd goddessship. I must go to dress and will finish my epistle in the evening.

Eight o'Clock

I am come to perform my promise, and to relate an incident, that has happened in the true spirit of poetical justice. Dick went to see his mother this morning, and found all the family in confusion. Eleanor crying, her mother soothing her, and Cassandra speaking in a most heroical stile, but I must give you the relation in Dick's own words, or it will lose all its spirit, suppose him therefore speaking as follows.

"The moment mother saw me, she ran and kissed me, and then fell a blubbering. In what quarter does the wind sit now? (cries I;) so Nell began to squal the minute I spoke. O ecod, if you are at that sport (says I, good by to ye, and I went to the door." "Stop," (says Cass) walking towards me so slow, that if I had a mind I could been at Lord Morden's before she got to the door. "Stop" (says she,) we want your assistance to redeem the honour of our family, and to revenge your sister. For fun's sake I went back again. "And now, pray Cass (says I) please to tell me in plain English what all this fufs is about?" "Your sister (says she holding up her head as high as she could,) your sister has been betrayed in the infections of her soul."

And then she went on heaping a parcel of high flown words atop of one another, that

that nobody could tell what to make of. So as soon as she stopped, "Ecod, Cafs (says I,) you might have spared yourself the trouble of that long speech, for the devil a word of it all did I understand." "O Dicky, child (cries mother,) O Flaherty's run away from your poor sister, and she's a widow bewitched as a body may say." "O ma'am, (says Nell, roaring still more,) why do you tell my misfortune to one who I'm sure will be wicked enough to rejoice at it." "Ecod; that's true says I, and I think your'e served right enough for all your roguery to cousin Sophy." "You think so, firrah?" (says she) running to claw my eyes out: but I gives my lady a trip and laid her sprawling before she could look about her. So she liked that place so well, that she never tried to get up, but kept crying out that I had murdered her, and she would have me hanged. "Faith Nell (says I-) that's the best thing you can do to yourself, and if I was you I would, if it was only to haunt O Flaherty.—Ecod, you'd make a fine frightful ghost, with a necklace of rope. So then she fell into a fit of streicks, and I ran away."

Dear madam, is not this a charming piece of news? it has delighted us all, except Sophia; and she has some primitive principles that are fitter for a convent, than a court. Chapman and I, still continue peaceable, and I have given a sort of half promise

promise to take him for better for worse; entre nous, I think the last most likely to happen, having never perceived in him, any great tendency to improvement. I must tell you though to prevent mistakes, that this same promise, was preceded by another from Sophia to Mortimer, of consequence, I do not set, but follow an example.

* * * *

“Daughter of my affection! (said Mrs. Stanhope, to Sophia, as I entered the drawing room just now) what thanks, what gratitude do I not owe that Being, who has allotted such a partner for my son!” “O madam, (answered Sophia, the tear of delight trembling in her eye.)—O madam, how sweet this approbation!—how grateful to my heart! I feared—how unjust were my fears! that reproof.—

All the virtues practiced in their fullest extent subjects for reproof?—no, my child, far from deserving reproof you are above all praise.”

“For heaven’s sake, my dear (said I to Sophia,) do tell me what Mrs. Stanhope alludes to?” “You are so curious Lucy,” and she blushed.—“No, not curious, I would simply judge if you deserve these encomiums so liberally lavished on you; so pray indulge”—“Your inquisitive humour,
(interrupted

interrupted she, smiling "but for once Lucy, I will be even with you for those mysteries with which you have so often tormented me."—"You will not tell me Sophy?"

"No, positively no." "Provoking chit!"

Mortimer just then coming in, I made him acquainted with the subject of my complaint. "Your friend (said he smiling) differs so much from the generality of the world both in principle and practice, that I think she should be punished for her singularity. And therefore"—Sophia interrupted him, "And are you to be my executioner? then I declare it shall be only in effigy." And away she flew.

Mortimer then told me the whole affair, which is neither more nor less than this: Sophia has sent to Mrs. Woodville for a list of her husband's debts; which she means fully to discharge; and also to add to their income an estate she possesses in Wiltshire, of the yearly value of four hundred pounds with remainder to Dick and Cassandra.

Now madam, to give you my opinion of this affair, I really think it may class with works of supererogation: humanity does not enjoin us to reward villainy, and there are enough of distressed and virtuous objects in the world to partake of her bounty. I will go and tell her so this moment.

* * * *

Well

Well madam, here I am again, but not conqueror. I attacked Sophia in full assembly, and made a long and eloquent speech which not being successful, I omit repeating.

"Your arguments do not strike me as conclusive, Lucy (replied my opponent,) "but as I find myself indisposed for disputation, I will only refer you to a certain volume, where it is written, Do good to those who hate and despitefully use you.—Love your enemies.—Return good for evil,—with many other apothegms to the same purpose, and one of which is I think a sufficient answer to your harangue."

"I will have no references, you shall plead your cause in propria persona, though in truth I fear a little for the impartiality of our judges."

"I agree to your proposal, and now to begin. My uncle, for many years preserved an unimpeached character, you grant this Lucy?" "Yes for any thing I know to the contrary."

"He would still have preserved it, was it not for the temptation thrown in his way."

"That is merely a possibility, Sophy; however I grant it you, for really it is not much in your favour: what a number of good people should we see, had they no interest to be otherwise!"

"Lucy, you are infringing the rules of disputation;

disputation; I will have no inuendo's." "I submit, what next?"

"You grant Mr. Woodville was well disposed, before my fortune fell in his way." "That he did no mischief 'till he had an opportunity, admirably disposed indeed!" "Again Lucy?" "No child, I have done." "May I not then, to pursue what I was saying, look on myself as the primary cause of his deviation from virtue?"

"The premises are doubtful, my dear."

"That point is for our judges to decide; to me nothing seems more clear, and I will argue in consequence of my conviction. As then I was the cause of his degeneracy, should I not do all in my power to further his return to goodness? were I to leave him to the misery of his present situation, harrassed by the sting of reflexion, and tormented by acquired wants, which he cannot relieve, what horrible effects might not ensue from his despair: effects which would not be felt merely by himself, but participated by an innocent family: and shall I to save a little superfluous dross, consign them to misery? No, Lucy, the world might acquit me, but my own heart never would."

"Sophy (cried I) your last words are unanswerable, and I give up the point without a decision."

"I fear, cried Mortimer, this moderation of

of yours proceeds from an apprehension of losing your cause."

"Well, (answered I) allowing your opinion just, is it not better to submit with a good grace, than to do so per force? But really your supposition is wrong; for I have always held that the dictates of the heart should be obeyed, malgre the rule of right and fitness of things, provided always its mandates do not clash with the laws of religion or morality.—Chapman, I dare say, (added I, smiling sweetly at him) entertains a better opinion of my sincerity than you do."

The poor soul grinned from ear to ear at this reference, and then opening his mouth wide enough to swallow one, was going, I believe, to be pretty loud in his approbation, when I stopped him short by observing, that his testimony might be suspected, as a prejudiced person. You see, Madam, we are on very good terms — no caprice, no sauciness, all sunshine and good humour.

We go this night to the Ridotto, where I expect to meet Lady Anne H——, and propose, if the stars have not otherwise decreed, to pay her in her own coin.—Not another word, my Friseur waits, and he exacts as much attention as the first peer of the realm; I am not quite certain but he deserves it better than some of them. His profession if of no real utility, has a negative virtue:—now most of their lordships have

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have no virtues of any sort:—Am I not very severe? I hasten away lest I should take a fancy to meddle with politicks.

“Now awful beauty puts on all its charms.”

But mine are already put on, for I am dressed, and just setting out for the place of conquest. I look—O for an epithet suitable to my appearance!—I have it.—Yes, I look divinely! But then, 'tis not a set of features and complexion, the tincture of a skin, that I value myself upon—but that *Je ne scai quoi*, that nameless, bewitching, undefineable something, that renders the little Lucy, with not half the charms of a hundred Lady Bab's, Bell's, and Bridget's, universally admired by the men, and envied by the women!

My dear creatures, I am only as in duty bound, saying a few things to *ma chere mere*.—They threaten to go without me—I must tear myself away.—Adio.

* * * *

Last night!—I will mark it with a white stone, or as Sancho says, with red oker!—Or then had I not the extatic pleasure of seeing Lady Anne H——, ready to tear my eyes out? O the dear delight, to see her
fretting

fretting and fuming, and yet unable to vent her rage.

I think I gave you a hint of my pious intention to return evil for evil. All things answered to my wish as you shall hear.

I entered the ball-room with that ease and grace to me so natural. Lady Morden looked extremely well—Mrs. Villiers, the picture of Hebe—But Hortensia and Sophia——

†“ ——Fair as the forms, that wove in
Fancy's loom,
Float in light vision round the
poet's head,”

An universal buzz spread through the room in a moment; and “Good Heaven! how beautiful—what angels!” muttered the male creatures near us.——I disclaimed the compliment, being quite content with the charms of mortality; but Sophia and Hortensia betrayed their consciousness by their blushes;—and that suffusion encreased their beauty to such an insupportable degree, that if I were a man—but that *if* being out of the order of things, I will bury the rest in silence.

The universal notice we attracted, made us haste to seat ourselves out of a motive of pity; for Venus herself is most irresistible

able in motion.—My good fortune placed me next Lady Anne H——, and we entered into a sort of a hoity-toity conversation, made up chiefly of monosyllables.—Chapman soon after walking towards us, was saluted with an expressive smile by her ladyship, to which he returned a distant bow; but this repulse not discouraging her, she practised a thousand pretty little tricks to fix his attention; far from succeeding, he turned to me, we laughed and chatted away, to her no small annoyance. As the dernier resource, she very ingenuously contrived to drop her fan; it continued on the floor some time, and she would have been reduced to the disgrace of picking it up herself, had not I twitched Chapman by the sleeve, and in a pretty audible voice chid him for his negligence. This was enough, he instantly presented it to her ladyship, who seemed ready to burst from spite and vexation, but bridling her resentment she thanked him, and added she was sorry to give so much trouble.

This brought on the replies and rejoinders so quick, that I thought proper to interrupt them.—“Your Ladyship (said I in a good humoured tone) must excuse his stupidity. — Les amants are not the most clear headed people in the world: happy is it for Chapman, that I who deprive him of his senses, preserve my own so well as to
be

be able to rectify the mistakes he is eternally committing."

"You will allow me to doubt your power (returned she, affecting to smile, 'till I have Mr. Chapman's testimony in its favour; though he can be blind sometimes, I am loth to believe him totally insensible."

——" Ah Lady Anne——

—— My Lucy with exclusive sway,
Has every sense engross'd;
So fully—that I cannot say,
Which owns her power most."——

Is not that pretty? I assure you this stanza did more for Chapman than a twelve-month's fine speeches. To flatter one's vanity and vex one's rival at the same time, O delightful!—My pleasure was extreme, as you will suppose, but much exceeded by Lady Anne's indignation. Resolved to pursue my triumph, I turned to her with a smile.—"You are amazed, I dare say, (said I) at Chapman's capacity, but Master Cupid does wonders every day."

"It is with reason indeed he is painted blind" (retorted she, not able to constrain her anger any longer) but as a friend, I advise you both to be less lavish of your fondness in publick, it is quite surfeiting." She arose, and with her companion went to another part of the room, where she was soon joined by a trifler, an insignificant one, who makes speeches on your glove string

string—a man of the ton, and a great favourite with the ladies,—in short, Lord Clayton: Malicious to the last, I determined to draw away this Adonis from Lady Anne, and to prevent any mal-apropos accidents, whispered Chapman not to be jealous.

The minuets being over before our arrival, I had no opportunity to exhibit my pretty person that way, but country dances soon beginning, I gave my hand to Chapman, and joined the set. We stood next couple to Lady Anne, and before the dance was half ended, I had effectually detached her partner's attention from her to myself.

That dance ended, he led Lady Anne to her seat, and returning instantly, begged the honour of my hand, for the two next. —This grace was accorded him, and I too chusing to sit down, he placed himself at at one side, and Chapman did the same at the other. I chatted to them both with my accustomed vivacity, some time, when chancing to turn my eyes towards Lady Anne, she honoured me with a look of disdain—"For Heaven's sake, (cried I to Lord Clayton) go to your partner, she will never forgive me for detaining you thus."

"Mon Dieu, can she expect to be looked at and you present—She may do assez bien pour passer le tems:—but the moon is only valued in the absence of the sun."

"Ver

“Very gallant upon my word; but I entreat you will return to Lady Anne, and deprecate her wrath, or who knows what effects may ensue.”——“Ah, you are wise as fair, and fair as wise; I haste to obey.”

So saying, he advanced to Lady Anne, who had heard all that passed: she repulsed him with an haughty air, and soon after quitted the room so tormented by shame and vexation, that even I could almost have pitied her. As for Lord Clayton, having no farther use of him, I treated him with such indifference, that he thought fit to transfer his devoirs to some kinder fair one.

Colonel C—— is certainly stricken, he never quitted Hortensia during the night, and his evident admiration seemed to give her much pain. He is too amiable to be unhappy; I am therefore sorry for his attachment, but these headstrong men will do every thing their own way, and I certainly warned him of his danger. He got himself introduced to Lord Morden, so I suppose we shall have a visit from him shortly.

As this was the first time of Sophia's appearance at a public assembly, since her return from France, numberless whispers circulated at her expence.

Lady Betty Crofton, that quondam innamorata of Mortimer's, entertained a select coterie of belles and beaux with a pretty tale of her own invention, setting forth as
how

how—"That Lord Mortimer, it was true, when only plain Mr. Stanhope, had paid his addressee to Miss Nelson; but on the accession of his present title and fortune, had entirely forgot her, till going to Paris on a party of pleasure, he learned by some chance, that the power Mr. Woodville pretended to have over her was merely usurped; and getting one of the witnesses to Mr. Nelson's will over to his interest, he set about that Quixotish enterprize, (added she) of which you have all heard the event."

Observe dear Madam, this was only the ground-work of the piece, for she threw in several ornamental tropes and figures,—such "As that he had indeed the insolence to make addressee to herself while both were on a visit to Alton Park, but that on her representing to Lord Alton, her inability to remain at his house, if liable to such affronts, his lordship had very kindly interfered, and hinted to Mr. Stanhope the impropriety of his conduct, since which time he had the discretion to trouble her no more." She ended this entertaining history with observing, "That Miss Nelson, poor thing, believed all his professions sincere, which, (she added with a shrug) was not at all surprizing, her understanding being but moderate, and all who knew her, being sensible that she had nothing more to re-

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commend

commend her than a baby face and an immense fortune."

The coterie made various comments on her ladyship's detail: the women depreciating Sophia's merit to the utmost of their power, and the men saying—"That from their own knowledge of Lord Mortimer's disposition, her ladyship must be perfectly in the right.—One peer brought as an instance of avarice, the infrequency of his appearance at Boodle's, saying—He had seen him there but once since his return to England, and that he had refused to play any more after losing twenty pieces."—"Ah the miser!"—"the horrid bore!"—exclaimed all the females at once.—"What is very extraordinary (said a second Right Honourable) he never wins more than that sum, and always seems more pleased when unlucky, than when fortunate." Every body agreed this moderation to be no more than want of spirit. "Ah (cried a young Miss, on whom you may see Lady Betty's lessons are not thrown away) they say he was obliged to make both ends meet, during the life of his uncle: his lordship, doubtless, recollects the time when twenty guineas would have been to him an inexhaustible treasure; I dare say too, he keeps his old regimentals, as Alibeg the Persian did his shepherd's habit, to put him in mind of his original state."

This

This witty speech was received with a burst of applause, and another lady opening her lips to utter a few *bon mots* on the subject, Chapman, (who overheard all that had passed) came up to her, and making a low bow—"My dear Madam, (said he) permit me to thank you, I see your kind intention, you are going to defend my friend against the keen sarcasms of your companions."

The ironical air with which he spoke, made the females blush up to the ears, and the males take snuff. Lady Betty Crofton alone, appeared unmoved, she regarded him with an air of infinite hauteur, and thinking to mortify his vanity, pretended not to know him; but to her great disappointment, found he was not to be disconcerted in that manner.

"I own (cried he, saluting her) I did not expect to find Lady Betty Crofton, amongst the censurers of Lord Mortimer, once he was happier in her good opinion, and I am ignorant what crime he has committed to forfeit so enviable a partiality; unless indeed what your ladyship hinted of his behaviour at Lord Alton's be true, (here the dear friends of Lady Betty, began to titter behind their fans) in that case (continued he) I know not which to condemn most) his presumption or his folly, in attempting to address a lady, who has given so many proofs, and strong ones too, of her

attachment to the sober state of widowhood.

“ Sir, (interrupted Lady B—, stung to the quick at these innuendos) I can dispense with the pleasure of your conversation just now:—it may be very witty for aught I know, but I am really so stupid as not be entertained by it.” So saying, she and her companion arose, and went to another part of the room.

“ Well, I declare (cried the young lady who had been so witty about Alibeg and the regimentals) I believe Lady Betty has been a little poetical, else why was she so offended at what this gentleman said—I am almost afraid it was her ladyship who woo’d unsuccessfully——Ha! ha! ha!—the Fox in the fable exactly—who complained of the grapes being sour, because he could not come at them!”

“ Ha! ha! ha! (echoed another of Lady Betty’s kind friends) you are such a droll creature, Madden!—Yes, ’tis certainly so; I myself heard something of the affair before, and laughed in my sleeve at her ladyship’s tale; but one would not be so rude you know as to contradict one’s friend.”

“ My dear, you are too good (cried another) I should not have been so complaisant, but would assuredly have given her ladyship a hint I was in the secret.”

“ For

“ For my part, (cried the noble peer; who had been so severe on Mortimer for not losing his money at Boodle’s) I make it a point to oblige the beau sex—In consequence I should not have been so destitute of politesse as to contradict her ladyship, were she taking tout le monde to pieces.”

The Ha! ha! ha!—’s, and the Hi! hi! hi—’s now became general, and the coterie separated for the laudable purpose of their good friend’s ridiculous behaviour publick.

Adieu Madam;—I am tired.

L — C —.

L E T T E R XL.

*From the Marquis De LISSON, to Lord
MORTIMER.*

Chateau De Lissou.

THE Compte is no more ! Heaven will I hope accept his repentance, which was truly sincere. Jacqueline is in extreme affliction—amidst all his errors and his cruelty to her, he has ever been most kind and affectionate. Our brother, no longer Claude, but Compte De St Pierre, laments a parent so recently found with a concern, at once sincere and natural.

While Jacqueline is with him they weep together ; when alone with me, a gleam of joy often brightens his countenance, and seizing my hand, he exclaims, “ My brother—I shall see her again ! ”

The old Compte, some hours before his decease, fell into a deep sleep, and when he awoke, Jacqueline and Claude, (who had watched by him,) congratulated him on the goodness of his repose.

“ Ah ! my dear children, (answered he) I feel an universal weakness pervade my
frame,

frame, that proclaims my dissolution to be at hand, but the idea gives me no terror; you have forgiven me, dear Claude, and I trust in the mercy of heaven, to do the same."

"O! my father, heaven will hear the prayers of your children—you will live to bless us!"

"Indulge not these vain hopes, my daughter: call Pere Maurice, I would receive the last sacraments of the church."

Jacqueline wept, and obeyed. Pere Maurice remained alone with his penitent, near an hour; we were then summoned, and the holy viaticum was administered—That ceremony over, "My children, (said the Compte in a faint voice, and motioning with his hand to us all) my children, and you generous friend of my Claude, approach; I have but a few moments to live, and those few, I would spend in your embraces."

Jacqueline all in tears flew to his pillow, and supported his head in her lap, Claude threw himself beside the bed, and catching the Compte's hands, kissed and wept over them.—Beaumont and I, knelt at the other side. The Compte, gently disengaging one hand from Claude, threw it around his neck and pressed him to his bosom with fervour. Exhausted by his emotions he sunk down in the bed, but afterwards regaining

gaining a little strength, he asked for Du Bois. — That faithful creature who was sobbing aloud in a corner of the chamber, now approached the bed.

“ Du Bois, (cried the Compte, taking his hand) we have grown old together — thou hast served me well, but I fear, I have often used thee unkindly.” “ Oh, no, — no !” (cried Du Bois, unable to articulate any more. — “ My poor Du Bois, (said the Compte, greatly affected) thou forgettest all the bad, and rememberest only the good. Thou wilt soon have a better master, he whom thou hast often interceded for with an honest eloquence, which would have moved any heart less obdurate than mine, thy beloved Claude, to him dost thou from henceforward owe thy duty ; he will take care to make thy age comfortable and happy. — My daughter, one embrace — my son — heaven forgive.” He expired in finishing the sentence ; and we were forced to use violence with Jacqueline, in order to get her from the chamber. — Claude hung over the body in a melancholy silence — By some exclamations that at length burst from his lips, I found he not only mourned the Compte, at that moment, but his mother, and Madame Des Estampes.

When things are ready for our departure, we will visit your England. —

Adieu

Adieu my dear friend, salute our Hortensia for us, and all the residue of your amiable party.

LISSON.

A letter from Claude to Hortensia is omitted as are more from Miss Craven to her mother, being immaterial to the history.

L E T T E R X L I

From Miss CRAVEN, to Mrs. CRAVEN.

Portman Square.

"He comes! the conquering hero comes!"

YES, my dear Madam, we expect the young Comte De St Pierre, and his charming family, every moment. Hortensia is in the prettiest tremour imaginable, her heart goes pittee pattee, at the sound of every passing carriage.

I left Doctor Wentworth, and Lady Morden, good souls! preaching patience and philosophy to her, and I dare say they are conning over the Enchiridion of Epictetus, for maxims. I bid Villiers assist them, as he was the best practical philosopher I knew, and then to avoid a retort ran up stairs, as I hate quarreling with any body but Chapman.

Sophia had the discretion to keep aloof while I was present, fearful of my railliery, no doubt, but I suppose is now talking as wisely as the rest. Heaven help them all! 'tis spending a great deal of breath to no
fort

fort of purpose: yet those people forsooth, pretend to give the appellation of madeap to your little Lucy, who has more solid sense than all them put together. 'Tis true indeed, I am (like every person of uncommon understanding)

“ Above the fix'd and settled rules
Of vice and virtue, in the school's.”

Were any other than ma chere mere, to behold this epistle, I should be unmercifully mauled on the score of vanity; but you, who are sensible I do justice to the merits of other people, will allow I may do the same for myself; not indeed that I have any violent necessity to be my own trumpeter, my good qualities being generally known and admired. Now a word or two, of the amiable family of the Woodville's. Two days ago, we had a visit from Cassandra. She entered the drawing room with her accustomed dignity, and advancing slowly, made a gracious inclination of her head to all present; then quicker than her ordinary pace walking up to Sophia, threw her arms around her neck, and gave her a most strenuous and heroine like embrace; then scarce suffering her to take breath from the ardour of this salutation, she laid one hand on her's and made the following harangue.

a. I

“ I resent a most sincere joy, my fair cousin, at beholding you again ; and I beseech you to believe that nothing but a species of refined treachery, could have deprived you of that high station in my esteem—which was most deservedly due to your transcendant qualities. I blush to own by whom I was misled ; or what fraud was used to circumvent my understanding : many renowned personages have been happily deceived in the same manner. The divine Cleopatra, (which is a case in point) imposed upon by the artifices of Tiberius, believed Coriolanus unfaithful ; and drove the poor prince from her presence with the most cutting expressions, when he came to lay those crowns at her feet, which he had gained by the point of his sword. Consider then, fair Sophia, that I am not more culpable than Cleopatra, and that this princess, maugre her severity, was never condemned by her beloved Juba for the rigour she had manifested towards him : consider this I say, and let that prince’s moderation be an example for you.”

“ There needs no more, dear cousin, (answered Sophia quickly) believe me, I hold you in the same esteem I ever did.”

“ Your goodness is superabundant (cried Cassandra again) and as you no longer entertain any diskindness towards me, I expect to be restored to your confidence.” Then drawing her to the window with an
air

air of mystery. " I am told, (added she in a lower voice) that you will soon give me a kinsman in the person of Lord Mortimer; he is worthy of your choice, and though the heroines of antiquity were seldom content with less than ten years of attentions from their lovers—yet the valiant Mortimer has haply done more for you, in a few months, than theirs did for them in so many years." " I am happy to be acquitted by you, (answered Sophia smiling) permit me now to introduce you to those of my friends, who have not already the pleasure of your acquaintance."

The ceremony of introduction was scarcely over, when Dick came in—" What, Cass here! (exclaimed he laughing) didn't I tell you all, she was out of her tantrums? I warrant she's been telling you of Clopatra's, and Cornellus's,—for ecod, I heard her stringing over a pack of them there hard words, to mother this morning."

" Why will you expose yourself, (cried Cassandra, with a look of disdain) by attempting to treat of things, haply above your capacity?—the names of those great personages you mispronounce, Clopatra's and Cornellus's, are of a nature too refined to be profaned by vulgar lips. Were the great Coriolanus now alive, you would haply have to dread the effects of his resentment, more indeed on the divine Cleopatra's account than his own."

" Whew!

“ Whew! (interrupted he) where the devil are you running? Who cares if all those great persons, as you call 'em, were fouled to the bottom of the Thames—I warrant there isn't one here that wouldn't lend a hand to give 'em a good ducking.”

“ Oh no Dick, (said Villiers) be assured we have too great a respect for those princes to treat them as you say; besides the attempt would be rather difficult as they have been in their graves near eighteen hundred years.”

“ Then let 'em rot and be damned! (resumed Dick) and I wish with all my heart that Cass was with 'em, to tell 'em how well she takes their part.”

Ah!—“ The fleet hoof rattles o'er the flinty way.”

They are come!—I fly!

• • • • •

Chapman, Mortimer, Villiers!—what are ye all but mere beef and pudding?—I declare off—I will not be married.—
The Compté de St Pierre.

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“ Oh! he is all that painting can express,
Or youthful poets fancy when they love !”

Had you seen him when he flew enraptured, not to the feet, but into the arms of his Hortensia—when he pressed her to his bosom—when he half articulated—“ I have thee again!” when overpowered by access of transport, both fainted, had you then beheld the fringed curtain of his eyes shading a pair of brilliants “ too strong for mortal sense.” Ah! my poor papa, what had become of him? better have his daughter’s heart, as it is, irrecoverably-lost, than to be deprived of Madame la Femme’s.—“ Of two evils, chuse the least,” is a maxim which I dare say will have its proper weight with him.

I say nothing more of the meeting, as all that is better imagined. The Marquis De Liffon is nothing more than *assez bien*, near the irresistible St Pierre. The Marchioness is a beautiful Pallas. Cassandra confesses she comes nearer her idea of a heroine than any lady she has yet seen, always excepting her fair cousin and the beautiful Gaul, as she calls Hortensia.

Lord Beaumont has an extraordinary good person, and a sensible face pitted with the small pox; is cheerful, lively and good humoured, and amazingly fond of his

his friend. Poor man, he is in a bad way, all the females of his party, being either married, promised, or designed. But as he complained last night of the vacuum in his heart, we must try to fill it up; for which purpose, I desire you will prepare Charlotte Andrews who is to be of our party to Mortimer park.—In the mean time, I will take care to preserve it from being stopped up by any of the misses of this town, who go about seeking what they may devour. Sophia taps at my door.—I must leave you.

Evening

We ordered ourselves to be derided to all the world this day, but by some mistake or other, one of the servants let in Colonel C——. Hortensia, and her lover, were whispering tender things in a window, when he entered: Sophia, sat near the door. He stopped for a moment with her, and then advancing to Hortensia, placed himself close beside her.

Claude eyed him a little oddly, now and then, as much as to say, “What business have you here?” and the Colonel answered in the same expressive and polite language, “What is that to you?”—Their glances shot defiance, but their lips were silent:
and

and Hortensia not much pleased with this sort of dialogue would willingly have interrupted it. She looked at Sophia— Sophia, ran up stairs; but it was in search of me who, she judged would be a pretty enough sort of auxilliary.—This explains to you the tap at my door.

Three words told me the whole affair: another would not have understood it in twice the number of sentences. Certainly some Fairy gave me at my birth, the gift of acute penetration. Or, to mingle great things with small. I possess the true Attic genius. You will allow the likeness if you take the trouble of turning over the preface to one of Demosthenes's orations,* which, I cannot tell, but read them all and then you cannot fail of finding it. For fear however you should mistake the subject, I will premise to you, that it is a sort of parallel between him and Cicero, in which their different styles of eloquence (the Grecian, strong, nervous, and concise, the Roman, polite, flowery and diffusive) is supposed to proceed from the dissimilarity in the genius of their hearers. The Athenians being a fine lively penetrating people who understood discourse in short hand, and knew what an orator would be at, before he had concluded a period.

Leland's translation.

The Romans on the contrary, though possessed of much good sense, a little thick headed in those matters, and requiring every side of an argument to be shewn before they gave their assent to any. "Dear me, (as monsieur Jourdain, says) what a fine thing it is to know something ;*" yet I fancy you would have spared this display of my knowledge just now. I must turn over the page to see where I left off.

Well Madam, I went down with Sophia and begged leave to interrupt the trio: knowing that in silence is mischief, we have the example of Cassius a man of few words, for that—ah this is too learned—I must put away the pen 'till I am a little more settled, or this letter will be the second edition of the king of Bohemia and his seven Castles.—

* * * *

At length Madam, I am determined to write plain matter of fact, and I hasten to give you a specimen.

I talked so much and so long, that I tired both myself and the Colonel; and seeing him ready to wish me hanged, or in any other situation equally pleasant, to amuse him still more, I begged leave to introduce

duce him to the *Compte De St Pierre*.—
Each bowed, but the Colonel turned pale.
He arose soon after, and went to another
window, where I followed.

“What say you to your new acquaintance? (asked I, smiling) is he not charming?” “Too charming I fear, (answered he with a deep sigh) but who is he?”

“You have a bad memory indeed; have I not already told you his name?”

“Yes, but that is not all.” “Not all? then for the rest, he is a nobleman of great worth and character.—*Mademifelle De Aulay*, and he, have had a long attachment, which will terminate in a few days.”

“In what way, Madam?” “In the old way—matrimony.” “Good God! he remained silent a few moments, then striking his forehead, with an air of distraction exclaimed) it is past and I am miserable!” I was going to say something by way of reply, when without saluting any body, he snatched up his hat and flew out of the room.

Claude looked astonished, but had discretion enough to ask no questions; and we all remained in an odd *tid didum* sort of way, till relieved by the entrance of the *Marquis* and *Marchioness*, *Mr.* and *Mrs. Villiers*, &c. &c. &c. who came pouring in upon us.

Sophia then prepared to visit the *Woodville's*, and I came up to write. So far, so well.

well. But if this Colonel should have any of the spirit of an Orlando in him, our halcyon days may come to an end.

To prevent all accidents, I think it is best for them to marry speedily, and I intend to propose it when I go to tea, though most probably I shall be drawn into the scrape myself, but that consideration shall weigh nothing against my friendship for Hortensia.—Am I not a good creature? yes, without doubt, so that point settled I bid you adieu.

LUCINDA CRAVEN.

LETTER

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L E T T E R XLII.

From the SAME, to the SAME.

Portman Square, Thursday.

ALL is fixed, and I am taken in as I said.—This day week, (alas the day) am I to give up the dear name of Craven, for that of Chapman; whether with a good or a bad grace, we shall see when the time arrives. Not having the fear of the world before our eyes, we shall be married against all fashionable rules at church, in the face of men and angels, as my friend Winefred says. I speak for Sophia and myself: Hortensia, will be tied by the French Ambassador's chaplain—Immediately after the ceremony we go to Belmont, and there my dear parents will see their good for nothing Lucy, metamorphosed into a matron: not indeed into all the gravity of that character.—I am determined to preserve my usual humour let what will happen; if Chapman proves an agreeable husband, which I have some reason to think—I will laugh with him;—if surly and morose—at him; so you see I am provided against all contingencies.

I

I told you in my last, that Sophia had gone to visit the Woodville's—Mrs. O Flaherty entreated her forgiveness in a manner like herself, that is to say, extremely mean.—She threw herself on her knees blubbering, and Sophia shocked at the littleness of her submission, assured her of her pardon in a tone, which told it was accorded more from a principle of duty than choice.

Cassandra and Dick are invited to Mortimer park : Dick will come with us, Cassandra follows some time after. Mr. and Mrs. Villiers and Mrs. Stanhope cannot quit town so soon, owing to Louisa's critical situation. We females would have deferred the ceremony 'till this event was over, but the boisterous men would not hear of it.

I caught Sophia reading a prayer-book, this morning, in the very article of matrimony. "Ah! my dear," (cried she, holding it out) "see here what cares we are going to take upon us." "Speak for yourself, my dear," (answered I) if you chuse to take cares upon you, I beg to be excused; they are not at all to my taste."

"Read, read—(resumed she) and you will change your tone. Not I, indeed Sophia; I shall have enough of to have and to hold," next Thursday, and 'tis sufficient to do a disagreeable thing once."

Ah

" Ah Lucy, if Mortimer ever ceases to regard me with the same tender and lively affection he does now, what will become of me ?"

" If he should, serve him the same way." — " Is that so easy ?" " Yes, at least it would be so to me : but pry'thee child have done with your ifs ; Sufficient to the day is the evil thereof." " Ah Lucy ! if you loved as I do, " — " Loved as you do—really I give a pretty reasonable proof of my love in consenting to marry the man : you have my leave to do more for Mortimer if you can. I am not indeed so distressed about ifs as you are ; for I am sensible they are all in my own power." She held her peace, but did not seem to be struck by my arguments.

" The man who complies against his will, Is of the same opinion still."

And why not the Woman ?—Adieu, my dear madam.

Yours ever,

LUCINDA CRAVEN.

LETTER

LETTER XLIII.

From Mrs. CHAPMAN to Mrs. VILLIERS.

Belmont.

WOULD to heaven, my dear Louisa, your accouchment was fairly over: were you and Villiers here, there would not be such a set of turtles in the universe. — As it is, I believe we bear away the palm. A quintetto of pairs living together, loving and beloved, what an article for the annals of fashion!

Knowing the ridicule we should meet with from people who know the world, and resolving, still to incur it, did we not wisely to hide our devoted heads in the country? Though really to such a pitch has refinement grown in this civilized age, that happiness in marriage is almost as seldom met with, in rural shades, as under courtly portico's.

Yet after all, Lord and Lady Morden, and the Liffons, are the only pairs in our party who have a right to boast of their good understanding.

(I mention not pere and ma chere mere, they being old fashioned people, and
confe-

consequently no example) but as I was saying, Hortensia, Sophia, and I, may hold our tongues, we have been married no more than a week, and the most genteel people think it incumbent on them to be fond for one month.

Apropos, that month being emphatically stiled the honey moon, we females, who are sensible that too much sweet palls on the taste, are determined to mix a little acid, which will qualify it so well as to render it palatable to our mates for the rest of their lives. I intend to throw in a little of this lemon juice from time to time, (observe I will have nothing to do with vinegar) I fancy my companions in slavery will not be so lavish, nor indeed do I know wether it would agree so well with Mortimer and St. Pierre, but I am certain of its good effects on my Caro.

All the misses of the country have been to visit us, and I have shewn off some fine airs upon the occasion: matrimony improves me wonderfully; you cannot imagine how grave and stately I behaved.

We were at church the day before yesterday; and could scarcely get in for the croud that were assembled in the porch, to see the lovely brides and eke the bridegrooms. These last soon found a way of dispersing them by flinging their purses about: "God bleis your noble honours,"

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was

was echoed from every mouth, and we had a free passage.

As we went up the aisle, such whispers of "My God, what charming men! what beautiful women!" that we poor females blushed up to the ears, as to be sure we could do no less.

Such was the good effect of the purses, that at the conclusion of the service, we found our carriages at the door, and the mobility drawn up in lines at each side. Our servants were ordered to supply them with fresh amusement, and we proceeded home amidst the acclamations of numberless voices.

O how I hate the winter! but for this vile frost, we should have ten thousand pretty entertainments in the rural stile, and now we are obliged to keep within doors. We shall have all the genteel part of the neighbourhood with us to-morrow. We meet in masquerade habits. Hortensia, a Paisanne; Claude, a simple Berger; Mortimer, prince Hal; Beaumont, a Falstaff; Sophia, a Vestal; the Marquis De Liffon, a Friar; the Marchioness, a Sultaneß; Chapman, Ancient Pistol; and I, Dame Quickly; Dick, according to his usual elegant taste, a Dog teacher. My father and mother, wear dominos. Two days after, we give a feast to the tenants; and those things over, proceed immediately to Mortimer. Chapman taps at my door;—he insists

sists on being admitted. Insists!—upon my word you must speak in a softer key, my good sir, if you expect my compliance with unreasonable demands.—Ah! I hear the voice of my dear St. Pierre.

Sweet as the shepherd's pipe upon the mountains.

There is no resisting; here are half a hundred of them: they take away my pen.

LADY MORTIMER, writes.

Yes, Louisa, we have taken away her pen, nor shall it be returned 'till she behaves better. This morning, on saying I would write to you, the impertinent chit laughed in my face, and asked where I should find time? She had the sauciness to add, that I was so taken up with speaking to, and looking at Mortimer, she wondered how I could think of eating, dressing, or sleeping, much less of writing; and then according to her usual method of avoiding disputes, betook herself to her closet, before I had time to reply.

You perceive however that we ventured to disturb her retirement; and to punish her yet more, I read her epistle aloud while Mortimer and St. Pierre secured her hands.

That acid she talks of, is a pretty thing in theory, but I assure you, if we are to judge from present facts, she means not to put

put her maxims in practice : never was so fond, so obedient a wife ; all honey, no lemon juice : Chapman is in more danger of being spoiled, than either Mortimer or the Compte.

Mrs. CHAPMAN writes.

Do you believe her, Mrs. Villiers ? Ah, you know me too well to be so credulous : nothing but spite—"proud spite" Chapman will tell another story. Do you know, she has almost tempted me to use vinegar ?

Mr. CHAPMAN writes.

She bids me write, madam, and I have but one theme, my felicity—I am indeed the happiest of men, and cannot tell whether she gives me pure honey or mixed, but it is the pleasantest beverage in the world, were I to write for ever, I could say no more—again I repeat, I am the happiest of men !

LORD MORTIMER writes.

Not the happiest, but one of the happiest : more, would be superfluous as witness my hand—Mortimer.—and mine—St. Pierre—and mine Lifson.

LORD

LORD BEAUMONT writes.

What shall I do?

Mrs. CHAPMAN writes.

Very well good people, you have written your scraps, let us see what they produce. After all Louisa, I am the only person for a correspondent, these people make a mighty vapouring about it, but when they sit down, you find they have nothing to say.

Now my chat is endless, "A mine of entertainment, and a treasure of delight" † A Butterfly, a cap, or any thing equally material, is to me an inexhaustible theme; or if these subjects fail (which however is improbable) I recur to my dear friends the historians, and expatiate for hours, on the rise and decline of empires, the defects in ancient or modern policy, &c. &c. Which do you chuse? but as that question cannot be answered till your next letter arrives, I will conclude this; on'y telling you, that my father and mother are as happy as—as what? I declare I don't know, there are so few examples, of that sort, that I cannot just now make a simile. They have positively been boiled in Medea's pot: you have no idea how young they look.

O 3

Adieu

† Cervantes.

Adieu my dearest.—Do my baife mains to
Villiers. We all join in wishing you every
happinefs. See our hands to it.

Lucinda—Sophia—Matilda,
Hortensia—Jacqueline—Maria,
Mortimer—St. Pierre—Chapman,
Morden—Liffon—Craven.
Beaumont,

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L E T T E R XLIV.

From the SAME, to the SAME.

Belmont, Friday.

YESTERDAY, was the day of days, of Tuesday I shall say no more than we met in our masquerade habits, (all the masters and misses of the neighbourhood present) looked divinely—kept up our characters admirably, and were consequently very witty;—danced from seven to eleven—supped magnificently, and separated at four in the morning, tolerably tired of our company.

But yesterday!—At noon, all my father's tenants, with their wives and children, assembled in their holyday suits, and were conducted into an apartment prepared for their reception, where a plentiful and neat dinner was provided. The old people, with my father and mother, dined at one table; the rest of us mixed among the young ones. At first they were somewhat reserved, but the familiarity of deportment we assumed, soon restored them to more confidence.—The young men, led by the

example of their superiors, (for let poets say what they will, politeness is not common among rusticks) treated the maidens with great civility and attention.

“ And harmless mirth, fat jocund at the
“ board.”

Dinner over we went into the hall, and prepared for a dance; the old people seated themselves on benches, to admire the feats of their children, and Mortimer and the Marchioness opened the ball. The rest took what partners they pleased; for my part, I chose a young rustick who had something more striking in his appearance than the others.

I had the mortification however to find him totally inattentive to the dance, which I imagined at first to proceed from ignorance; but on observing him more narrowly, perceived his eyes frequently turned towards an extreme pretty creature, Beaumont's partner.

“ Who is that girl? said I, twitching him by the sleeve. “ Girl—Ma'am?—I—I—don't—I can't tell.”

“ You can't tell—then I suppose you wish to be better acquainted—for you have looked at nothing else this half hour.”

“ O Madam, (said he, recovering from his confusion) that is Betty Wilson, farmer
Wilson's

Wilson's daughter, who came to live here a little after you went to London."

"And what sort of girl is Betsy Wilson?" "O Ma'am, the best creature in the world; but her father is main cross to her, because she's no mind to marry an ill-natured covetous hunk of a fellow, who is old enough to be her grandfather. But then he's very rich to be sure—and farmer Wilson cares for nothing else; so he's always scolding poor Betsy, who I believe will at last do what he has a mind to—for she's very dutiful, and can't bear to vex her parents."

"And pray my good lad, does Betsy like any one else better than this old hunk?"

"Indeed Ma'am, (cried he, throwing down his eyes and blushing) I believe she does, but then the person is poor, and has a mother and two little sisters to support by his labour; and farmer Wilson to be sure, could never consent to such a match, nor would he desire to marry her without it, as he would sooner die than bring her to distress."

"And you are this young man?"

"Somebody has then told you Ma'am," said he blushing still more.

"No, none but yourself—but hold your tongue, and mind what you are about."—The dance over I sought Chapman; he was talking to Mortimer and St. Pierre. My tale was soon told, and had a proper effect

on my auditors. Mortimer insisted on managing the whole matter himself ; this was accorded with some difficulty, Chapman and St. Pierre having themselves a tolerable penchant for doing good. He conquered however, and flew away in search of farmer Wilson ; I followed, in spite of all he could say to the contrary.

We found the man we wanted in a moment. He was a tall hearty looking fellow abot fifty, with some expression of good humour, and more of insensibility, in his countenance.

Mortimer addressed him first.—“ I congratulate you my good friend, (cried he) on being to all appearance the happiest of your honest neighbours.”——“ How so, your honour.”

“ In being father to that pretty girl ;”—(pointing to Betsy) who, if I have any skill in faces, is as good as she is beautiful.”

“ Your honour is pleased to joke !”——

“ Not I indeed, I speak as I think.”——

“ Why, for the matter o’that, an’t like your Lordship, the girl’s well enough, were she minded to do as I bid her : but the women are so plaguy self-willed now-a-days, that their heads run upon nothing but contradiction.” “ Your daughter, I am sure, is not of this character.”

“ As to her character, please your honour, I believe she takes care enough of it, and so she ought, for ’tis the most she has

to.

to depend on; but I says nothing about it, nor to be sure is it right I should, for bad is the bird that befouls his own nest —

'Tisn't that I would be at; but here I have provided Betsey a good husband who would give her gold to eat, as the saying is, and the foolish baggage says truly as how, she can't give her mind to 'en; and one time he's too old, then too ugly and ill-natured, then too stingy; though I'm sure, if she marries him, 'tis better for her he should keep her money, than spend it. But these flim flams won't pass upon me; I know she's a hankering after a young fellow in the village, who is as poor as a rat. A pretty kettle of fish she'd make of it to take him, who I suppose would go in a few years for a soldier, and leave her with a parcel of brats on the parish! no, no, I will have the girl marry as I like, or she shall turn out of doors." — "You have no other objection then to this young man she likes, but his poverty?" "An't like your honour, I think that enough, will love make the pot boil?"

"No, but suppose that objection removed, have you any other?"

"I can't say I have." — "Then my friend, discard the old man, and give your daughter to the young one; she will be happier, and shall be richer."

"When the sky falls we shall catch plenty of larks:—no, no, a bird in the hand is

worth two in a bush. But here comes Betty, and I begs your honour will hold your tongue; she is headstrong enough already."

"Then before she arrives let's settle the matter. I will give this young man three hundred pounds to stock a farm which I intend to let him have at a reasonable rent. Think you, will that render him equal to your old one?"

Never did I see astonishment more strongly expressed than in the farmer's countenance at these words. After a silence of some minutes, he recovered himself, and with something between a sneer and a smile, said, "Your Lordship is pleased to joke, but I am not such a fool as to believe you."

"Why not? Is it such a mighty wonder, that a man should part with a little trifling dross, he has no use for, to make two people happy?"

"Indeed (returned Wilson) I think it wonder enough; one hears of such things in story books, but these are not true; your great lords find enough to do with their money, in buying horses and hounds, and losing it at cards, without making people happy.—What's a thing that never comes into their heads."

"I hope to make you change your opinion, (cried Mortimer) and if you come to me to-morrow morning, will shew you I am a person of my word."

The

The farmer lifted up his hands and eyes, to the great credit of our nobility, and Mortimer and I joined our young rusticks. I contrived to place myself next Betty; and after asking some trifling question, which she answered modestly, "So pretty a girl as you (said I) cannot be without numberless admirers; give me a list of them, and I shall guess which you prefer." — "Indeed Ma'am (answered she blushing) I have no admirer, I am too poor to have any."

"But you are too pretty to be without 'em."

"O Ma'am you are very good; but I hope I know myself well enough not to become vain of your compliment."

"You are a sweet girl, and a sensible girl, (cried I) you deserve to be happy, and shall be so." I left her at these words, and joined my friends. I say nothing more of the entertainment, as I am eager to return to Betty.

This morning Wilson trudged to Belmont; he asked for Mortimer, and was ushered into the parlour where we all were.

"An't please your honour, (said he, scratching his head) I had no great stomach to come on this errand, but my dam insisted on it, and as I said before, women are self-willed. To be sure your honour thinks no more about last night, for indeed I did believe your honour to be a little overtaken. — No offence I hope."

"None

"None at all, I am only sorry for the honour of human nature, that your incredulity should be so great. But to put an end to all doubt, I will send this moment for your daughter's lover. What is his name?"

"John Norton."

Mortimer instantly dispatched a servant for him. As it was some time before he returned, we entered into chat with Wilson; and found him, though so unwilling to allow that lords could be generous, an intelligent shrewd fellow.

"John Norton came at last, he seemed surprised at seeing Wilson. "Nay, never stare man (cried the farmer) though faith you have reason enough; here's a lord that does good, and is going to give you a power of money, that you may marry Betty, and what's more, it isn't to get your vote at an election, or any thing of that sort, but just to make you both happy! Only think of that, a Lord make people happy!"—"My God! can this be true?" cried Norton, staring in earnest. "It is my good lad, (said Mortimer) why should you doubt it?"

"You are neither a lord nor a man, (exclaimed Norton, embracing his benefactor's knees, while a tear started into his eye) you are an angel out of heaven! My God, is it possible, can there be such goodness!—let me kiss your blessed hands again and

and again," added he, seizing and almost devouring them."

" You pay me too many acknowledgements, (cried Mortimer, much affected) every person in this company would do the same for you that I do."

" Heaven bless them all, (returned Norton, with his eyes running over) Heaven bless them all, but you will get me Betsey!"

These few words were more emphatick, than a thousand sentences. Every body testified how much their hearts were affected.—Even old Wilson, " Albeit, unused to the melting mood," winked now and then.

He was the first who broke silence.—
" Come John (said he, applying the corner of a handkerchief to his eyes) don't be a whimperer, my girl will never have you if you be a milkfop. But your honour, or my lord, since this is no Fairy Tale, I insist on having my own way with Betsey. I am minded to give her a little surprize, and away I'll go this minute to do it; so I begs that no one here will give her an inkling how the world goes, 'till I please. As to you, John, you sha'n't have her at all, if so be you don't do as I bid you."

John promised obedience, and Wilson made him go to the servant's hall till called for; then going away, returned in an hour with his daughter in his hand.

" Here

“ Here she is, gentlefolks !—here she is, (cried he in an affected passion)—Wouldn’t one think I was going to kill her, instead of marrying her to a person, who will let her roll in riches ;—and is besides young and agreeable.”——“ Young, and agreeable,” repeated she with a deep sigh.—“ Yes you hussy, (resumed he) what the dickens, would you have your husband a chicken ? I suppose I must get little Tommy Knowles for you ?”

“ Oh father, (said she, lifting up her eyes) what need is there to expose me to these gentry ? I am willing to do as you would have me, though I know my life will be the sacrifice.”

“ Your life, pretty nonsense ;—I suppose you get that out of Don Belianus of Greece, or some other foolish story book :—this comes of teaching girls to read !——But where is this husband ?”—Said he going out.

Poor Betsy, grieved and ashamed, put her apron over her eyes, and wept heartily. He returned in a few minutes with Norton.—“ Come take down your apron, (cried he) I will have none of these childish tricks :—kiss your husband, like a good girl.”

Not finding her in haste to obey, he snatched away the apron himself—she looked up and saw Norton.

I was

I was near with some salts, or she had infallibly fainted. Her cheeks kindled—her eyes glistened—and she seemed overwhelmed with confusion—but it was the confusion of joy.

I will tell you no more. The lovers are to be married at Mortimer Park: every thing is prepared for our departure, so direct your next letter there.

Adieu ma tres chere amie. Tell Villiers, if my epistle does not entertain him, he has no taste for rural simplicity.

LUCINDA CHAPMAN.

LETTER.

L E T T E R XLV.

From Mrs. VILLIERS, to Mrs. CHAPMAN.

Pall Mall.

GEORGE's taste for rural simplicity must be unquestioned, for he is extremely pleased with your letter, and joins with me in admiring your Betsey and her lover. But I must turn from this agreeable subject, to another more shocking. Do not however be alarmed, I have only to recount a wonderful and terrible instance of the justice of providence.

Woodville is no more! yet it is not so much his death that is dreadful, as the manner in which he died.

Dijon, it seems was the place of his retreat. The morning of the day he died, he got a letter from his daughter Eleanor, which informed him, of Sophia's forgiveness and bounty. That evening he walked late in one of the outlets of the town, and was returning, when two men on horseback suddenly attacked him.—They took all the money he had, and then mangling him dreadfully, rode off with their booty. His groans at length brought some charitable people about him, and with difficulty he made

made them understand where he lodged. He was carried there, and the hosts sent for a priest, and surgeon. His wounds were examined, and all help found to be in vain. The priest happened to be an Irishman, and Woodville made him write a letter to his wife which he dictated, but he refused his assistance in a spiritual manner.

He had the full possession of his senses to the last, and that encreased his agony: about twelve he expired in the midst of the most excruciating tortures, both of body and mind. Good God! my dear Lucy, he confessed in that letter, that he had resolved to make away with Sophia, some way or other; when his horrible design was rendered abortive by my brother. Can we ever sufficiently praise and thank that Providence, who thus preserved the innocent and punishes the guilty? I cannot say I am sorry for the wretch's death, but I pray heaven to accept his sufferings in this world, as a sufficient compensation for his crimes.

Adieu my dear. My mother sends a thousand blessings to her Edward, and Sophia. Villiers joins me in every thing tender to you all.

LOUISA VILLIERS.

P. S. I send some letters to Dalton, I am sure they are answers to those he wrote to Ireland. How does the flirtation go on between Lord Beaumont, and Miss Andrews?

L E T-

L E T T E R XLVI.

From Mrs. CHAPMAN, to Mrs. VILLIERS.

Mortimer Park.

I shewed your letter to Sophia, and it had just the same effect I expected: no sooner had she perused it, than up stairs she flew. I followed quick, but very softly; and peeping through the key hole of her closet, beheld her on her knees, her fine hands and eyes lifted up to heaven, in the attitude of praying. I attempted not to disturb her, but stole down as I went up.

After dinner, when the servants were withdrawn, I turned with a serious air, to Hortensia and St. Pierre.—“Pray good people, how long is it since you have converted Lady Mortimer?” “Converted her!” repeated St. Pierre, with an air of surprize. “How so, pray?”

Nay, I am ignorant of your method, but am sure it must have been very forcible; Sophia being once as pretty an heretick as myself.” “For heaven’s sake, what mean you Lucy?” (interrupted Lady Mortimer.) “Pay my dear hold your tongue, I am speaking to the Compte De St. Pierre.”

“Then

"Then (cried he) I must repeat the question."

"Is not praying for the dead, an article of your ritual" (asked I) Sophia blushed.—

"It is," replied the Compté. "Then Lady Mortimer is to all intents and purposes a Bon Catholique, for I saw her a few hours ago making her orisons for the repose of Woodville's soul."

A general smile ensued at these words, and poor Sophia was compleatly abashed. Doctor Wentworth being a primitive protestant did not like the joke. "Pray (said he, turning to Sophia) was your Ladyship really employed in the manner Mrs. Chapman speaks of?"—"I was indeed Sir, but I assure you it was merely an involuntary impulse." "I am satisfied," (replied he). But the matter did not rest here; St. Pierre and the Marquis entered into an argument with him, on the principle points of doctrine in the two religions: it ended amicably however, our disputants, not thinking it necessary to load one another with abuse, for the honour of God. And the doctor was very well satisfied his opponents should remain in their own faith, so Lady Mortimer did not change hers.

I assure you I was highly entertained by the controversy: but will not give you an account of the Pour's and Contre's, knowing your little taste for theological matters.

You

You judged right about Dalton's letters, poor fellow, they have opened enough the wounds of his soul. His father is dead, and his mother unkindly hints his behaviour,—to have been the cause of that event. She tells him that Mrs. Allyn lives in Dublin, rather in a low stile: that Fanny's death affected her so deeply, as to deprive her of any attention to her lawsuit, which was consequently given against her, with costs of suit. "Wretch that I am!" said he, after perusing this account, "Why does the earth hold me?"

Mortimer insisted on seeing the letter. "Yes, my Lord" (said he presenting it) "it is just that you and all the world, should be acquainted with the effects of my crimes!" "Dalton, (cried Mortimer, after reading it) this indignation against yourself would be reasonable, were it not in your power to relieve the distress you lament."

"Ah, my Lord! would to heaven I could do so, with my heart's best blood!"

There is no need of so fatal a resource, (said Mortimer, whispering something in his ear.) "Great heaven! what do I hear, is it possible in man to be so exalted? exclaimed Dalton, starting back. "But my lord, I cannot suffer this last proof of your munificence: what I have already recieved I will share with the victims of
my

my crimes! never—never, could I bear to be a further burthen on your goodness.”

“ Dalton, resumed Mortimer, smiling, I am rather obstinate, my pride will not suffer me to be outdone in generosity by you; submit therefore with a good grace to what cannot be avoided: pride and obstinacy are too formidable antagonists, and you have no business to resist them.” In saying these words he quitted the room. My God, what a man! (cried we all)

Thank heaven, he has fallen to my lot, said Sophia, smiling through her tears. Not a dry eye was in the room, as to Dalton, he wept and sobbed like an infant.

I don't know how it is Louisa, but a generous action, generally gives me the face of a Melpomene, whether this emotion is owing to the infirmity of human nature, or the scarcity of virtue I leave to Casuists to determine, for my part I never enter into abstruse discussions of the wh'y's or the wherefores.

Mortimer has carried his point, and Dalton sets off for Ireland in a few days, with Doctor Wentworth, who insisted on bearing him company. He is to have his pockets laden with banknotes, and the deeds of two annuities, one for Mrs. Alleyn, of two hundred pounds per annum, the other half that sum, for his mother.

Louisa,

Louisa, your brother is certainly the noblest man in the world independent of his title. All the time he was in France, some magnificent works were carrying on here according to his directions. The principal of these are two buildings, of which I will tell you the use.

The first is a school, which will contain all the poor children in the country; the girls are to be taught plain work, knitting and spinning, and just as much learning as will enable them to read their prayer books. The boys to read, write and cypher, and at the same time to be instructed in all laborious occupations suited to the lower classes of life. But this is not all, as soon as arrived at a proper age, they are to be apprenticed out at the expence of their patron, to any employment they and their parents chuse.

Doctor Wentworth who resigns the living he now holds, for one in Mortimer's disposal is to superintend this, and the other house, which is allotted for the reception of poor people who are past their labours, and where they are to be supplied with all the comforts and conveniencies of life.

Lord Mortimer, entirely to banish idleness and poverty from his estates, has divided them into small farms, which at once improves his own income, and renders all his tenants equally respectable. Nay more, he is at this moment in treaty, for a vast

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track of barren and uncultivated ground that lies contiguous to this estate, and which by the exertions of generosity and industry, he means to convert into a fertile and advantageous possession: imagine what a number of hands this must employ, and what an universal blessing, your brother!

Adieu—what an inferior being in the scale of humanity is your

LUCINDA C—

P. S. I forgot to tell you that Lady Mortimer had sent her Chaise for Cassandra, and a consolatory letter to the mother, accompanied with a pretty sum for her present occasions. Where was my recollection? I have a commission for you too: find out if possible whether Watson, Sophia's woman, is in London, and give her the inclosed letter from her Lady. I am unacquainted with the contents, but can give a pretty shrewd guess.

P

LETTER

L E T T E R XLVI.

From the SAME, to the SAME.

Mortimer Park.

WE are all in wonderful joy, my dear Louisa, at your recovery. Villiers was a good creature to write * the moment you were safe, and has mightily obliged me, by calling the brat Lucinda.

Sophia has written a long letter † filled with congratulations to you and your caro.

I will be a sponser, that is a point fixed: though heaven knows I have enough to do to answer for my own frailties, without taking those of others upon me. I am however in hopes that I shall not be overburthened, as papa and mamma, are good sort of people, and will take care to bring up Miss Lucy in the way she should go.

I bespeak her for wife to my son and heir, whenever he comes. Her being older than him is charming, she will be the better able to guide her husband, which to do ~~em~~ justice, is a point that few wives old or young, are deficient in.—Heaven has

* This letter does not appear. † Nor this.

has wisely ordered, that if men lord it abroad, we do so at home, so that the balance of power between the sexes is equal.

How I prate—somebody says brandy makes a woman talk like an angel; now really I have taken no dram but a little of Cassandra's exhilarating conversation:—more would have had the effect of strong beer, stupified instead of enlivening me.

Betsy was married last week; we had feasting and dancing in abundance, and she and her husband are as happy as any two people under the sun.

Poor Charlotte Andrews is fairly caught by that urchin Cupid,—but I begin to fear Beaumont is a true philosopher, for let Villiers pretend what he will, he is not worth two farthings for one*. Now Beaumont I call a true philosopher, because I fancy he has no heart.

I have read somewhere or other, for I don't understand Greek, (which I think necessary to premise you, fearful you should have a better opinion of my learning than it deserves) I have read I say, that the true meaning of the word philosopher, is a lover of wisdom; now I think it should be translated—a practicer of folly, for philosophy consists, according to all ancient sages, in slighting the blessings of existence, pretending to be pleased when you

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are

are grieved, and vice versa to the end of the chapter,

And pray is not a person who enjoys the pleasure placed within his reach by the hand of providence, a thousand times more to be commended than the lover of wisdom, who flings them away like a froward child? I assure you I have no doubt at all about the matter; and as to bearing misfortunes patiently, which philosophers value themselves so much on, I think it no merit in them, for a person who has accustomed himself not to feel joy, cannot be sensible of grief. Since therefore apathy is the ground work of philosophy—Lord deliver us from it. Shew this to Villiers, and ask his opinion of my definition. Adieu my dear—take care of yourself, and present my love to my godchild, who I dare say will be sensible of the favour.

L. C.

LETTER

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LETTER LXVIII.

From the SAME, to the SAME.

Mortimer Park.

WE have heard from Dalton. His mother received him better than he expected, and to this kindness, the annuity I dare say was a powerful incentive. He has been to visit his brothers and sisters, who are all married, and settled in houses of their own.

The interview between him and Mrs. Alleyn, was to the last degree affecting; you will excuse my transcribing the letter as I have already cried too much for one day. He had a meeting also with his old master G——, and the latter most justly accused himself as the cause of all Dalton's subsequent errors and misfortunes, you may be surpris'd at my saying most justly, but recollect dear Louisa, that Mr. G—— was the person who persuaded his father to thwart his inclinations, and breed him to a profession that nature had never designed him for. So much for Dalton.

I am beginning to think our philosopher is no philosopher, I have discovered him paying several little attentions to Miss Andrews, which carry strong marks of the heart. But do you know there is another petitaamour going on here.—I would give you two hours to guess the parties, cer-

tain of your being as wife at the end, as at the beginning.

Horatio Gordon, and Cassandra Woodville (do not stare) have mutually discovered perfections in each other, which have been hid to all the world beside. Yes indeed, she says he possesses all that delicacy and forbearance, so admirable in a lover; nay, has proceeded so far, as to declare she does not hate him: which confession he received with a composed rapture, to use her own expression. His love indeed is not violent enough to make him commit any extravagancies on her account, but then he talks—"Good gods how he will talk!" I believe I am acquainted with the rise and progress of this amour: we were talking of love one day, some attacking, some defending for the sake of argument, when suddenly he burst out with an heroick declaration, "That were he enamoured—no difficulties, no dangers, could prevent him from pursuing his passion, and protecting its object." Upon which Cassandra observed, that as he resembled Horatius Cocles in name, so he resembled him in sentiment, for that Hero had with unparralleled bravery withstood a whole army of enemies in the cause of Clelia, and prevented them, in spite of their numbers, from passing a bridge which he alone defended.

Gordon, who had some faint recollection of what he read at school, though not enough

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enough to distinguish the true from the false, was highly flattered by this comparison of Cassandra's. From that moment he paid an unusual complaisance to every thing she uttered, and in short, they are now a pair of most diverting innamorato's. The fair one, however, unwilling to deviate from the rules of romance, is determined not to reward her swain's passion, these ten years at least. So that we have no chance to see this pair of originals, made one fool 'till the end of that time, unless she falls into a river, or from the top of a house, and he prove lucky enough to save her from being drowned or breaking her neck, either of which incidents would go a pretty way towards shortening the term of his probation. Dick, is a great annoyance to their loves; and Gordon would quarrel with him if he dared, but this second Horatius is sensible he would have the worst of the fray, and wisely puts up with petty inconveniences, to avoid a greater evil.

Apropos of Dick, I fancy you will one day see him more polished than he is at present; ever since the account of his father's death, (which he bore with christian patience) his head has run on nothing but a red coat; and if his penchant holds, Mortimer will procure him one. So much for our dramatis personæ.

Hasten to us dear Louisa, without you,
Mrs.

Mrs Stanhope, and Villiers, our society cannot be compleat. Mortimer has secured his party 'till the middle of summer, the Marquis, Marchioness, St Pierre and Hortensia, then go to France, but have promised to visit England every second year. As to my Sposo and me, it matters not how we dispose ourselves. Adieu, and make haste to us, so bids your sincere friend,

LUCINDA CHAPMAN.

P. S. Good news for Villiers, his favourite Pere Maurice will be with us shortly—we got the intelligence just now, and some thing more, which I know not whether to call good or bad. Charles the Ninth, said a dead enemy smelt well, if so it deserves the former title; but not to keep you longer in suspense—know that the Marquis De Beauville is defunct, his motives for the attempt on Mortimer, remained inexplicable, till the grim tyrant frightened him into a confession: it seems he was a lover of the Duchess de Beaufort, and stung by the “green eyed monster,” formed that base design. Apropos, that same Lady is in a fair way of being consoled for Mortimer’s indifference. The young Compte De——is at present laying close seige to her, and ’tis thought she will surrender shortly;—here is a female postscript.

END OF THE LAST VOLUME.



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